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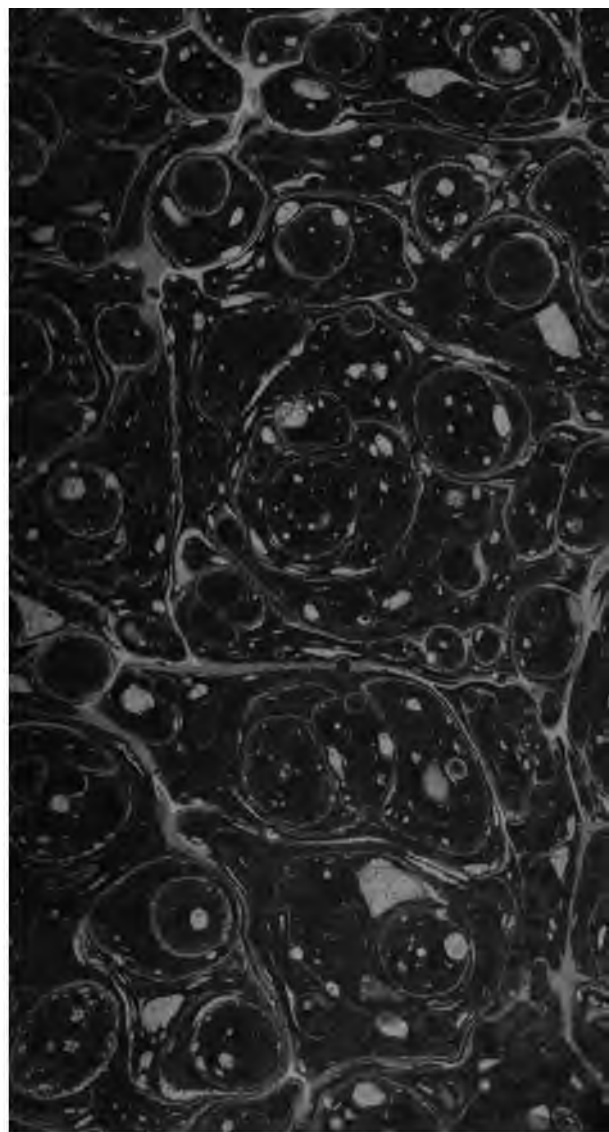
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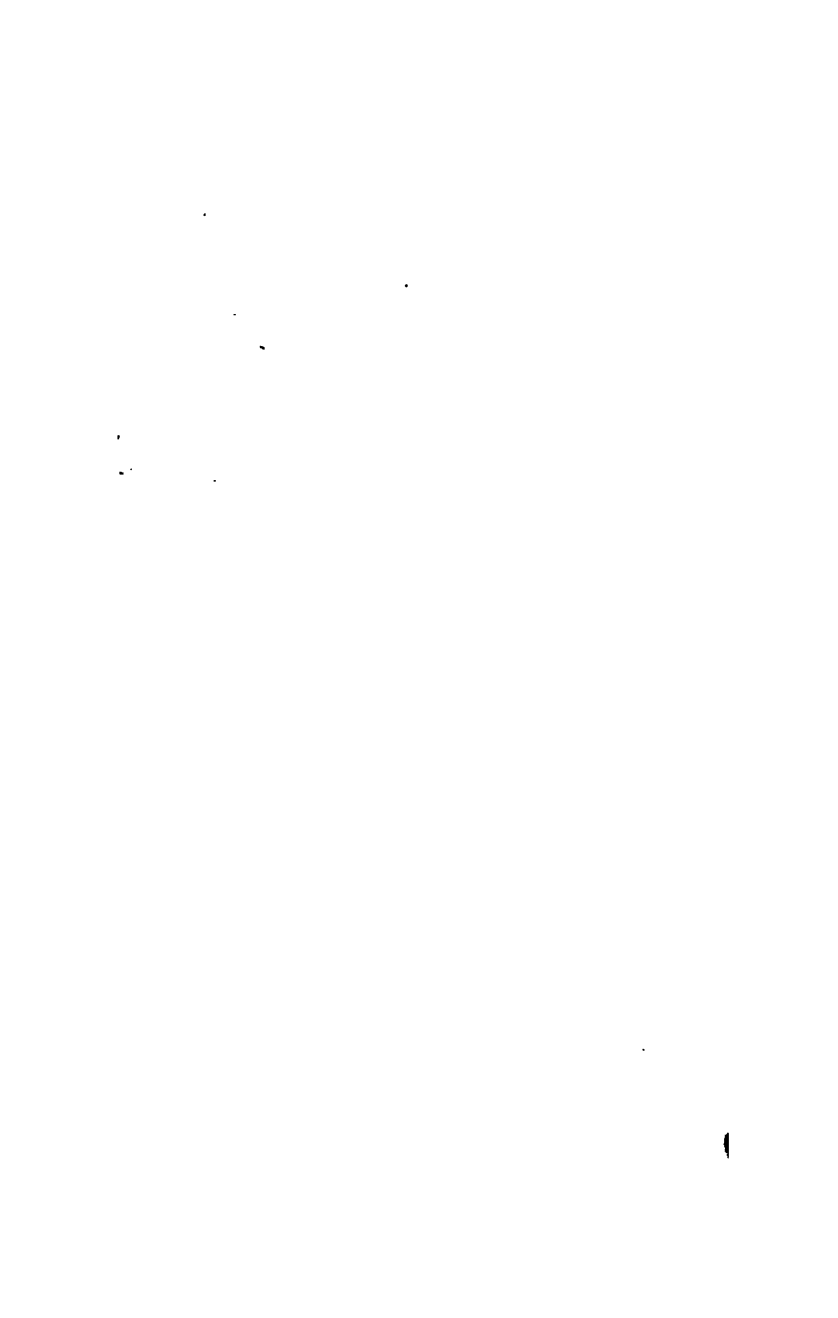


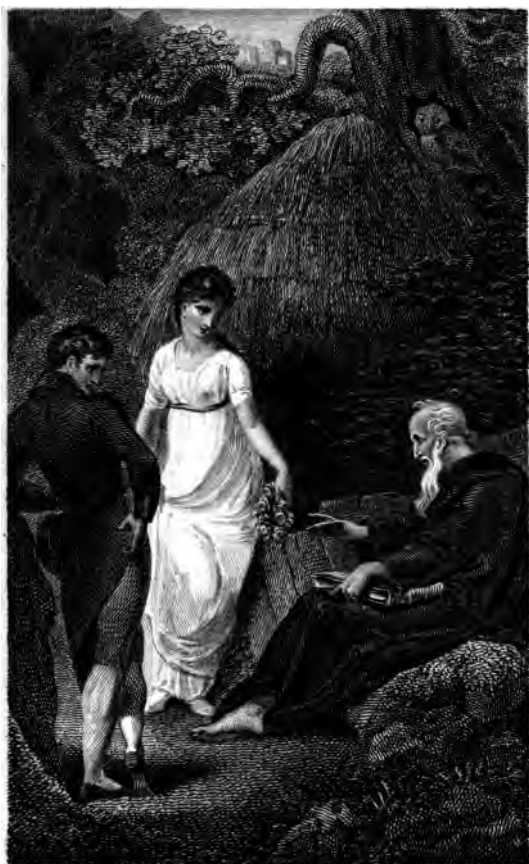
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216





*Think not the object gain'd, that all is done;
The prize of happiness, must still be won.*

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THE
GUIDE
TO
DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

'Hail, wedded love! by gracious heaven design'd,
At once the source and glory of mankind!
'Tis this, can toll and grief and pain assuage,
Secure our youth, and dignify our age;
'Tis this fair fame and guiltless pleasure brings,
And shakes rich plenty from its brooding wings;
Gilds duty's roughest path with friendship's ray,
And strews with roses sweet the narrow way'

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PREFACE.

IT is much to be regretted that many schemes which engross the attention and exercise the ingenuity of man, fail of success; not because the schemes themselves are either absurd or impracticable, but because the means employed are not adapted to the purpose.

That society is much indebted to individuals who have spent their lives or their fortunes in merely speculating on plans of general utility, cannot reasonably be doubted. To withhold the tribute of praise, in this instance, would be the height of ingratitude. But let those remember who are desirous of more substantial recompense, and emulous either to enrich themselves or to benefit the world by new discoveries, that they will,

like many of their predecessors, labour to no purpose, unless means can be devised that shall infallibly secure those advantages which, from the very nature of the case, mankind have reason to expect.

The principle of this remark is applicable to all the speculations and enterprises of life; and of course to every undertaking that has for its end the attainment of happiness.

The sources whence men are expecting to derive happiness, as well as the means employed to obtain it, are greatly diversified: and though the individuals who seek the inestimable blessing in the conjugal state must of necessity have recourse to different objects; yet, to be successful, they must all seek it by means substantially the same. But whether all, or the major part, have happily succeeded, is a question which the candidates who have tried the experiment are themselves best able to resolve.

In the present life there is indeed no condition in which unmingled felicity can be reasonably hoped; but no one, all things considered, is more likely to produce it than marriage: and were those persons who have not realized all the pleasure that is to be enjoyed in this endearing connection, to examine attentively the motives by which they were actuated in choosing a companion, it would perhaps be found, either that these motives were not such as could warrant the expectation of happiness, or that the object itself was ill chosen for the purpose.

‘ Of all the pleasures that endear human life, there are none more worthy the attention of a rational creature, than those that flow from mutual returns of conjugal love. An happy marriage has in it all the pleasures of friendship, all the enjoyments of sense and reason, and indeed all the sweets of life; and to make it so, nothing more is required than religion, virtue, prudence, and good nature. When two

minds are thus engaged by the ties of reciprocal sincerity, each alternately receives and communicates pleasures that are inconceivable to all but those who are in this situation: hence arises that heart ennobling solicitude for one another's welfare, that tender sympathy which alleviates affliction, and that participated pleasure which heightens prosperity and joy itself.'

But disappointment is the lot of man; what no prudence can always prevent, nor any vigilance wholly escape. Some disappointments are indeed comparatively trivial, and such as should not be suffered to interrupt our quiet; but there are others that interest all the feelings of the heart, and which no fortitude can meet without tasting the bitterness of sorrow. None, however, can be more affecting, or more pregnant with calamity, than those which are realized by individuals who have entered the matrimonial state in quest of happiness.

The present life may justly be consi-

dered as a life of hope rather than fruition. The best concerted plans may be frustrated by a thousand casualties over which we have no control, of which perhaps we never thought, and to counteract which we could therefore make no provision; but the causes of miscarriage, in reference to happiness in the marriage life, are not so latent as to elude discovery : many of them are sufficiently prominent to be seen without minute inspection ; and he that is determined not to profit by the pernicious effects they have had on others, must remember that if he be wretched, he is wretched by his own fault.

Affecting, however, and instructive as these considerations evidently are, how seldom are we provident enough to benefit by the indiscretion or the precipitance of others ! We see the painful effects of imprudence without taking the alarm : we rush into the same paths, and venture on the same experiments ; elated perhaps with a persuasion that we have sagacity to de-

fect the fallacies which others never could perceive ; or if not, that, in case of real danger, we have sufficient address to make a more successful retreat.

What, for instance, but misery can reasonably be expected when youth and age are united in marriage ? The association, independently of physical and moral considerations, is unseemly and unnatural. It is not likely, in the very nature of things, that such persons can feel reciprocal attachment—that warmth of esteem which is essential to mutual affection and to mutual tenderness. Their feelings, their tempers, their pleasures and their pursuits, must in some things be dissimilar if not opposite. Such individuals should therefore be excluded from a league that requires not only unity of design, but a choice of the same means ; in which the parties ought to feel equal interest and equal ardour ; and where joint efforts are indispensibly requisite to permanent success.

Nor is the enjoyment of connubial felicity to be hoped by those who were induced by avarice to give their hands where they could never give their hearts. The union of such individuals can be productive of nothing but misery. The motives of attraction will not by either of them be hastily forgotten ; and as the hours return in which it shall be recollected that, not the person, but the property was wedded ; the very person of each to the other will excite disgust rather than complacence. They will, it is true, possess the treasure for which they entered into contract, and for which they consented to be bound ; but not without a personal encumbrance that will not easily be borne, and from which probably each may be daily wishing for a speedy release.

But there are others, in whom the vice of prodigality rather than of avarice is predominant ; who long for titles and honours, for equipage and dress ; who are captivated with the glare of splendour and

the magnificence of show; who pant for pre-eminent distinction in the circles of fashion, and sacrifice by marrying, almost all that is venerable and lovely to gain it. These are indeed candidates for happiness, but not the happiness which conjugal endearments impart.

To these causes may be justly attributed much of the infelicity experienced in domestic life. These are not indeed the only sources of misery, but they are the most flagrant, and the most pregnant with calamity.

Those persons who, in marrying, were actuated by the purest motives, between whom there was no disparity of years, and who have since felt no abatement of esteem, will inevitably meet with many things to interrupt their quiet: but the marriages to which I allude lay a foundation for disaster. This indeed is not the formal object of stipulation, but it is virtually included in the contract: and to such marriages may

be fairly ascribed much of that profligate conduct which is so shamefully notorious in the present day, as frequently to become the subject of parliamentary discussion! and this too, not among the ignorant and vulgar, but among persons of taste and refinement; who have enjoyed all the advantages of liberal instruction; whose rank and station in life cannot fail to attract popular notice, and whose pernicious example may countenance, if not prompt others to the commission of those enormous crimes by which they themselves have deservedly become objects of abhorrence.

‘ Of him, to whom much is given, much shall be required. Those whom God has favoured with superior faculties, and made eminent for quickness of intuition, and accuracy of distinctions, will certainly be regarded as culpable in his eyes, for defects and deviations which, in souls less enlightened, may be comparatively guiltless. But, surely, none can think without horror on that man’s condition, who has been

more wicked in proportion as he had more means of excelling in virtue, and used the light imparted from heaven only to embellish folly, and shed lustre upon crimes.'

Such, indeed, is the depravity of human nature, that there is no evil which, when left to itself, it is not capable of committing. But as this depravity is common to every individual of our species, and yet all who are precisely in the same circumstances in the marriage life are not equally abandoned, there must be super-added causes where any are eminently vicious; and there are perhaps none more destructive in themselves, or more likely to create ignominious distinction, than those detestable motives which induce thousands to marry.

'The contempt in which domestic pleasures have in modern times been held, is, says Dr. Knox, a mark of profligacy. It is also a proof of a prevailing ignorance of real enjoyment. It argues a defect in

taste and judgment as well as in morals. For the general voice of the experienced has in all ages declared, That the truest happiness is to be found at home.'

Let the individuals therefore whom 'multitude of years should have taught wisdom,' seriously consider whether, by marrying those who might pass for their children, they can reasonably hope either to receive or to communicate the felicity which marriage was intended to produce. Can those expect to be happy, who for the sake of wealth, of titles, of splendour and of show, sacrifice youth and beauty—all the refinements of delicacy—all that a mind not vitiated by the fashionable vices of the day would think worthy of retention—nay, even conscience itself?—Impossible! In this case despair would be rational!

It must never be forgotten, that the means employed in every undertaking should be adapted to promote it. If no

regard be paid to this maxim, there can be no probability of success. But if, on the other hand, the undertaking be lawful in itself, and it be prosecuted by suitable means, there is ground to believe that if all be not realized that was ardently sought, something will certainly be gained.

Let the young seriously examine before they enter into the marriage state, whether their motives and their views be such as to warrant the hope of felicity. Or, in other words, whether they act with the circumspection that common prudence would dictate in things of much less importance. If this be not the case, the means and the end are at variance: happiness cannot be reasonably expected: and let those remember who are actuated by the purest motives, and who feel the strongest attachment, that to 'expatiate in chimerical prospects of felicity is to insure the anguish of disappointment, and lose the power of enjoying whatever may be possessed. Let not youth, therefore,

imagine that with all the advantages of nature and education, marriage will be a constant reciprocation of delights over which externals will have little influence, and which time will rather change than destroy.'

The present state is not such as will encourage the hope of unmingled joys. Every source of terrestrial happiness is more or less defective, and may be productive of pain when pleasure was expected. But let not the advocates for celibacy hence conclude that the conjugal life is more loaded with calamity than their own: for as Johnson remarks:—
‘ They that will not connect their interests with another, lest they should be unhappy by their partner’s fault; dream away their time without friendship, without fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day, for which they have no use, by childish amusements, or vitious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority,

that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude: it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.'

THE GUIDE,

&c.

LETTER I.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is compos'd
Of hearts in union, mutually disclos'd;
And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright.
COWPER.

OF all the tasks enjoined by duty or imposed by friendship, few, Melissa, are more difficult to perform, or when performed, more likely to prove unsuccessful, than that of giving advice.

Advice, which the sincerest friends are sometimes compelled by the purest motives of benevolence to communicate unasked, is seldom

gratefully acknowledged, or even received with the decent ceremony of respect. The very attempt is frequently considered as an impeachment of the understanding and the heart of him to whom it is offered : and though he may not have the vanity to believe himself beyond the reach of instruction, yet he feels so much self-importance, as to think the interposition officious ; that attention to the common rules of decorum should at least have imposed silence ; and that his monitor would have acted more in character, had his judgment been withheld until it was requested.

In delivering an opinion when it is sought with solicitude, there is certainly less risk of displeasure ; for who can be displeased with the completion of his wishes ! It is however probable that, in this case, compliance may be useless ; because the man who finds himself bewildered in contemplating an object of pursuit, generally endeavours to extricate himself without the assistance of others, and rarely discontinues the attempt till he has removed, or thinks he has removed, every impediment that ob-

structed his progress and damped his hope. He no longer finds objections to combat, nor difficulties to surmount. He therefore ceases to hesitate; he determines at once the course he shall steer, and afterwards entreats direction—not with his mind in perfect equilibrium—not so much with a view to make either scale preponderate that he may decide with the balance, as to know whether the sentiments of others concur with his own.

Are we then, it may be asked, to withhold the salutary aid of advice, because it is sometimes ungratefully contemned, sometimes received with indifference, and at others entirely neglected? Are there none willing to hear the voice of instruction, and ready to follow the dictates of friendship?—None who believe that wisdom is profitable to direct, and that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety? Yes; there are still those who are not wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight; and in this number I am happy to think Melissa is included: I therefore cheerfully comply with her request, suggesting at the same time, that

as all human decisions are subject to error, an appeal should always be made to the testimony of Him whose commandments are faithfulness and truth.—For he hath ordained that every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

You ask, Melissa, whether, in forming a matrimonial connexion, it be absolutely your duty to give your hand to the man whom you have reason to consider as a true christian; or, whether, without incurring the Divine displeasure, it may not be given to one who is nominally such, provided his character and his conduct, in other respects, be fair and respectable?

In reply to this interesting inquiry, I might say, with a sensible writer, ‘ That a woman who receives for her husband a person of whose moral and religious character she knows no more than that it is outwardly decent, stakes her welfare upon a very hazardous experiment. She who marries a man not entitled even to that humble praise, in hope of reclaiming him, stakes

it on an experiment in which there is scarcely a chance of her success.'

I feel, however, no hesitancy in declaring, That I think it your indispensable duty, as a christian, to give your hand and your heart to the man whom you have reason to view as a follower of Jesus; and that I think a contrary practice, let the character or the conduct of the man, in other respects, be ever so exemplary, not only inimical to conjugal felicity, but absolutely sinful.

In forming a connexion of such vast importance as that of marriage, the characters, Believer and Unbeliever, are extremely discordant: the association appears at once improper and unnatural: there can be no agreement: the very terms imply opposition; and surely little happiness can be expected where the very attempt to gain it involves a competition of interests.

The precept graciously given to the disciples of Jesus respecting marriage, has perhaps

been seldom properly considered: nay, the conduct of some individuals warrants a suspicion that it has never been consulted. But it was not so with the christians in apostolic times. Their hearts were replete with affection and gratitude. They felt too strong an attachment to their Divine master, to think of making a league with his enemies. They knew that 'the Lord had set apart the godly for himself—that they themselves were gathered from among the heathen to give thanks unto his holy name, and to triumph in his praise.' Their language was like that of Paul in another case, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Of the propriety of believers being united to each other in marriage, the church at Corinth seems to have been thoroughly convinced: nay, this conviction operated so strongly on the minds of those who had been recently converted from heathenism to the christian faith, as to make it a question whether the change they had happily experienced did not dissolve the mar-

riage contracted when both parties were, as to christianity, on a level. To solve a difficulty of such magnitude, application was made by the church to the great apostle of the Gentiles; who in his admirable reply, meets the objection, and reasons on it in a manner that reflects the highest honour on his conduct and his character. ‘ If, says he, any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away: and the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.’ For if the grace of God, in this case, dissolve the bonds of marriage, the children born while both the parents were in a state of nature, would be, as the apostle expresses it, unclean; but now are they holy; or, in modern language, legitimate—born in lawful wedlock. It is therefore plain that he was far from supposing such marriages void by any alteration in religious sentiments; and it is equally evident from the context that, while he maintained them to be legal, he was by this decision far from countenancing the believer in forming a connexion with one of

an opposite description; for in the same chapter he expressly prohibits such inter-marriages by saying, ‘The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; **ONLY IN THE LORD.**’

By the phrase, **IN THE LORD**, as applied to the person who might afterwards solicit the widow’s hand in marriage, we are undoubtedly to understand a true believer in Christ, in opposition, not only to heathens, but to nominal christians. Should it be urged, that between the heathen and the nominal christian there is a wide difference; it will perhaps be difficult to say, with regard to religion, wherein that difference consists; because whatever exterior advantages the nominal christian may enjoy more than the other, either as they respect christianity, the refinements of literature, or the polite arts; these advantages, simply considered, form no part of the christian character. The appellation of christian is peculiar to him that shall experience a change, not of extrinsic circumstances, but of the heart; and

of such change an heathen is as susceptible as the most enlightened philosopher of modern times. The carnal minds of both, by nature, are enmity against God; they are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: nor can the one say with propriety to the other, in reference to this awful fact, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou!

It is the christian name, and the profession of something called Christianity, by which numbers are deceived. Many imagine, because they were born in a country denominated christian, and educated in the doctrines of Christ, that they are, of course, real christians: but nothing is further from the truth. To be a christian in this sense, ' which is popular and fashionable, is neither difficult nor excellent. It is to be baptized, to profess the christian religion, to believe, like our neighbour, that Christ is the Messiah; to attend public worship once a week. In this sense, a man may be a christian, and yet habitually careless about eternal things; a christian, and yet fall

short of the morality of many of the heathens : a christian, and yet a drunkard, a swearer, or a slave to some vice or other : a christian, and yet a wilful impenitent offender against God and man !

‘ Were an Heathen to make a tour through England to learn the religion of the inhabitants, might he not conclude from their general conduct, that it consisted principally in a few Sunday formalities, and that the rest of the week they had nothing to do with God, or any religion, but were at liberty to live as they pleased ? And were he told that these were the followers of one Christ, and of his religion ; would he not conclude that Christ was certainly an impostor and the minister of sin ! But when he came to find that notwithstanding all this licentiousness, they professed the pure and holy religion of the bible, how would he be astonished, and pronounce them the most inconsistent barefaced hypocrites !

‘ A beggar that fancies himself a king, and trails his rags with the gait of majesty as

though they were royal robes, is not so ridiculous as one that usurps the christian name without a christian practice.' It is reported that Alexander had a soldier in his army of his own name, but a mere coward. Either be like me, says the general, or lay aside my name. And it has been said by a greater than Alexander, If ye love me, keep my commandments: herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. But he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is equally preposterous with the man 'that shall ridicule learning, and yet glory in the character of a scholar; or with him that shall laugh at bravery, and yet celebrate the praises of heroes.'

That the remarkable words, **IN THE LORD**, before mentioned, must refer to the true christian only, will appear abundantly evident by consulting some passages where the same, or similar expressions, are so used by the same apostle.—'Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are **IN THE LORD**—Salute Rufus chosen **IN THE LORD**, and his

mother and mine—Greet Amplius, my beloved **IN THE LORD**—For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light **IN THE LORD**—Many of the brethren **IN THE LORD**, waxing confident by my bonds—Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and **IN THE LORD.**’ When speaking of the visions and revelations with which the apostle had himself been indulged, he says, ‘I knew a man **IN CHRIST** about fourteen years ago, such an one caught up to the third heaven—If any man be **IN CHRIST**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new—And was known by face to the churches of Judea which were **IN CHRIST**—For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in **CHRIST JESUS**—Salute Adronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were **IN CHRIST** before me;’ or in modern language, who were converted to the faith of Christ before me.

Now in all these passages, and in many others to the same purpose, the apostle evidently refers to a state totally different from that in which all men naturally are, and different of course from that in which he himself and the churches and persons of whom he speaks were before conversion. His own character had been previously unblemished: his manner of life from his youth was after the strictest sect of the Pharisees: he was, as he expresses it, Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless; but so far was he from asserting, in reference to that memorable period, that he was IN CHRIST, that he expressly declares he was before a 'blasphemer, and a persecutor—that what things were gain to him, those he counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord: for whom he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found IN HIM, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith.' It is

therefore abundantly manifest, that by the phrase **IN THE LORD**, the apostle meant, and, in effect, said, That the pious widow was at liberty to marry whom she pleased, provided the object of her choice gave credible evidence of being a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ.

It has been suggested, That, in complying with the apostolic command, it was not absolutely necessary the widow should marry a converted person ; but that she was to retain her profession of Christ, and not to relinquish it for a husband. But this supposition inverts the question about which the Corinthian solicited advice: for the inquiry was not whether, in order to gratify their own inclinations, they might abandon their christian profession, and marry those who were not only strangers, but enemies to the religion they had recently embraced ; but whether, if married when both parties were in an unregenerate state, it were lawful for the believing wife still to cohabit with her unbelieving husband.

In reply to this inquiry, the Apostle says, If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away: which, as one remarks, must imply the unlawfulness of marrying such a woman: for were it supposed lawful to marry, there could be no dispute about living with her afterwards; because it is a less matter to hinder the contracting of marriage than to dissolve it when contracted.

If therefore it were a question whether the christian brother ought not to divorce his idolatrous wife, it is certain beyond a doubt that, had they been both single, he would have thought it unlawful to marry her.

This argument will appear still more forcible, if it be remembered, that the Apostle gives a latitude for parting when the unbelieving partner is refractory: for he says, If the unbeliever depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. From whence we may fairly conclude, that what is urged to justify separation in such a mar-

riage, must operate more strongly against contracting it.

Nor is it more plausible to say that the widow was to enter into the marriage state in the fear of the Lord, consulting his glory in an affair of such importance; because it could never be a question, as the objection supposes, whether this was a branch of religious duty: for it is at once apparent, that to reverence the Divine character, and to promote the Divine glory, are obligations from which no rational creature can ever be released. But admit the objection in its full force, and it may be asked, How could the pious widow enter into the marriage state with a view to the glory of her Divine Lord, when she was giving her hand to one whom she must consider as a stranger to God and to the gospel of his Son?—Experience, as well as scripture, must have taught her that the carnal mind is enmity against God; that he that is in the flesh cannot please him; and that to form an alliance with such a character, would be an impeachment of her attachment to him whose cause she had recently

espoused, and whom she had avouched to be the Lord her God. It is therefore evident, that when the apostle says, The widow is at liberty to marry whom she will, **ONLY IN THE LORD**; he intended to assert, and has in effect asserted, as a law to believers in every age, That they are at liberty to marry those, and only those, whom they have reason to consider as true christians. If this be not his meaning, it will be difficult to show that his words have any meaning at all; for what need was there of any qualifying clause, or of any restriction, if it were a matter perfectly indifferent whether the Corinthian convert gave her hand to a believer in Jesus, or to a worshipper of Diana?

Permit me therefore to say, That the words on which I comment, and which, in reference to the present question, were graciously given as a rule of christian duty, will bear no other interpretation: they are 'at once irrefragable and plain, such as well-meaning simplicity may readily conceive; and of which we cannot mistake the meaning, but when we are afraid to

find it.' She, therefore, who, to gratify a passion impatient of restraint, marries an unconverted man, forgets her allegiance to the best of sovereigns, violates a divine precept, and joins affinity with one who is an enemy to both his people and his government.

To avoid the force of the apostolic injunction, it has been objected, That marriage is a civil institution intended for civil purposes; that religion is a matter totally distinct, and should therefore have nothing to do in forming such connexions. Now suppose, for a moment, that the descendants of Abraham had argued thus when Jehovah said concerning the Canaanitish nations, and urged the worship of himself as the ground of the prohibition, 'Thou shalt make no marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.' What answer might the captious objector have reasonably expected? Surely no

other than that which was afterwards given by a zealous reformer—‘ Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?—Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.’

It is cheerfully granted, however, that marriage, simply considered, is an appointment purely civil : nor does this concession in the least affect the argument in question ; because whatever civil ends were to be answered by the institution, are surely as fully accomplished by the union of two believers, as by that of the real with the nominal christian.

Every man is induced by some motive to marry this woman in preference to that. Some men are influenced by the love of gain ; some by other motives equally detestable ; and some it is hoped, though perhaps but comparatively few, by the dictates of affection. In a man of true piety, religion becomes a motive that urges him to seek for a woman whose views and ex-

perience are congenial with his own. He remembers that it is said, Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance: and the object of his choice being in other respects conformable to his wishes, he sees it his duty and thinks it a privilege to marry her. All these individuals aim, or ought to aim, at promoting their own happiness; and in order to this, each has recourse to means that are thought suitable for the purpose. But does the motive by which they are actuated alter the nature of the institution itself? Surely not: nor can I believe that any person who has deliberately thought on the subject will assert it.

If promiscuous marriages with unbelievers had been allowed by the Head of the christian church, the apostle needed not have taken so much pains to persuade the Corinthian querists still to cohabit with their unbelieving partners; because this might have been done in a more summary manner, by informing them, That marriage was a civil appointment of God; that religion was entirely out of the question; that

if they were but married, it was of no importance when, or to whom; and that, as to the case of the widow, he had, for the same reason, no restrictions to impose. This answer would at once have quieted their minds, and have remained on record as a standard by which to decide similar inquiries in every period of the christian church.

But all the objections to which I advert, place the apostle as a logician, not to say as a divine, in the most inconsistent light imaginable. The new converts were, on account of their faith and steady attachment to Christ, persecuted from city to city. Of many it might be truly said, as the apostle did concerning himself and his brethren, That they had no certain dwelling place: and for this very reason he dissuades them for the moment, or, as he expresses it, Because of the present distress, from marrying even with believers themselves: while at the same time he was saying, on the principle of the objections, or must have said, had the question been asked, It is neither inconsistent with your christian profession, nor with the will of

Christ, to marry those very enemies who now thirst for your blood, but from whose malice it is nevertheless at all times your happiness to escape! He that can believe such contradiction, let him believe it—yet this is a consequence fairly drawn from the objections which I have endeavoured to invalidate.

I have briefly mentioned, Melissa, all, or at least the most weighty objections brought against the Law of marriage, as it respects the real christian; and she that is suitably impressed with her daily obligations to divine goodness, will neither want persuasion nor argument to regard it.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

‘ Congenial passions souls together bind,
And every calling mingles with its kind ;
Soldier unites with soldier, swain with swain,
The mariner with him that roves the main.’

IN the preceding letter, Melissa, I have stated the divine law graciously given to regulate the christian church respecting marriage. The injunction you see is explicit: subjection is therefore an indispensable duty, and should be considered as a privilege eminently valuable.

But supposing the believer in Jesus had no rule in this case by which to regulate his conduct, one might reasonably conclude that a regard to his own happiness would prompt him to solicit the hand of her who, all things considered, is most likely to promote it. But is it probable, is it possible, that felicity can be se-

cured by a connexion with one whose views of herself, of the world, and of God, are so different from those which experience has made to him both useful and familiar? It may be said, in reference to those that think so, as was said on another occasion; The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. They act more in character: their principles and their practice are consistent. For among these, few, if any instances, are seen of strong attachment to christians eminent for spirituality of heart and of conduct: and perhaps an individual cannot be found, who would not at once see the incongruity, and be even shocked at the bare proposal of marriage with a disciple of Mahomet, or a votary of Diana. But the believer in JESUS, who deliberately gives her hand to a merely nominal christian, is less cautious; because she must know that the object of her choice, however different and splendid his profession, is nevertheless as great a stranger to the life of grace and true godliness, as the deluded follower of that arch impostor, or the idolatrous worshipper of the Ephesian divinity!

It will be readily admitted that an unconverted man may be a good husband, a worthy master, and a kind father; but amiable and endearing as these qualities undoubtedly are, they make not the aggregate of a christian's happiness in the marriage life? These are ingredients indispensably requisite to the domestic felicity of professor and profane. But the follower of Jesus, who thinks and acts in this case consistently with his profession has, besides these, other highly important considerations that demand notice, and which are indeed essential to the completion of his happiness. He remembers that the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal; nor can he forget that it is said concerning these, 'Be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment—Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.' But how can two walk together except they be agreed? How can there be joint effort where there is opposition of sentiment? How could such persons consistently attend to the apostolic exhortation, 'Dwell with each other

according to knowledge—as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered?’

That conjugal felicity may be at once reciprocal and lasting, ‘there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both.’ But were you to marry the best merely moral man upon earth, you could not, as an affectionate wife, and as a devout christian, enjoy that happiness which, as such, you cannot but desire to experience. Your views and estimate of religion would be so opposite, that, in numberless instances, there could be no harmony. As a man of the world, he would naturally conform to its maxims and its pursuits. He might indulge himself in pleasures and amusements to him apparently innocent, but of which you would form a different opinion, and consider as having in themselves the most destructive tendency.

This difference of sentiment and of conduct

in you would not arise from any natural pre-eminence of state or of intellect. You would remember the time when you were, in a moral view, precisely in the same circumstances, and delighted with the same or similar pursuits; when, like him, 'you walked according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,' and thought it strange in the godly of your acquaintance, that they ran not with you to the same excess. The recollection of these particulars, in regard to yourself, would undoubtedly produce gratitude to him that had made the difference; but as it respected the eternal welfare of your husband, would operate so powerfully as to imbitter all the endearments of conjugal felicity.

The misery which the remembrance of these things might occasion would unquestionably be great; but were all the particulars enumerated that interrupt the enjoyment of tranquillity, they would be extremely various and striking. One, however, must not be omitted. It is more than probable that a man, with the

views already mentioned, would see no evil in violating the duties of the sabbath. He might perceive nothing wrong in taking, what he would call, a little innocent recreation, intended merely for amusement, or the continuance of health; and if there were children, he might judge it right for them to participate his pleasures. He might also solicit, if not endeavour to compel you to join in the same breach of duty: when the language of your heart would be, ‘How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord—For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.’

But should it be otherwise; should he recollect that it is said, ‘Blessed is the man that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil:’ should he conform to the outward duties of religion, and be apparently devout; still you would have the painful reflection that there was only

the form of godliness, or in other words, bodily worship, which profiteth nothing : that the mind was still in darkness, and the heart alienated from the life of God ; that in spiritual things, which are in your view of inestimable worth, he could take no pleasure nor see any beauty ; nay, it might be the secret language of his heart, ‘ When will the sabbath be gone, that we may buy and sell and get gain ? ’ With such a man there is, in spiritual things, no ground for communion : ‘ they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’ He cannot partake of those refined pleasures that are peculiar to the true christian : these are joys which a stranger intermeddleth not with : nor can he sympathize with you in the hour of spiritual darkness and distress. He is a stranger to the Father of lights and the God of all comfort. He has no access to a throne of mercy, and therefore cannot be a helper of your joy.

It should never be forgotten, that in every appointment of God, the most consummate propriety and beauty are united. He never

acts without a reason for his conduct: and though the motives for that conduct are hidden from us, yet we may be certain that all his determinations are under the guidance of infinite wisdom, and adapted to answer the grand ends he has in view. This remark will apply to all the ways and works of the Almighty. We may therefore rest assured that the command for his children to unite with each other in marriage, will, whenever they are disposed to form the endearing connexion, facilitate that noble design in promoting their own happiness. Would it not appear unaccountably strange, and contrary to the divine procedure in other cases, were he to countenance their marriages with the world at large, when, at the same time, he is calling them by his grace—separating them from the rest of the wicked; and saying, to the wondering spectator, ‘This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise—I have redeemed them—they shall sanctify my name, and fear the God of Israel!—For I the Lord am holy, and have severed them from other people, that they should be mine.’

The whole world, by nature, lieth in wickedness. It is said of men, without exception, 'That the fear of God is not before their eyes—that they are all gone aside, altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one—yea, that the carnal mind is enmity against God.' Peremptory, however, and perspicuous as these divine declarations evidently are, 'there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.'

Self-love is connatural to man. We are not very prompt in crediting that which our interests require to be false: and he in whom this passion is so predominant as to produce habitual confidence in his own discernment, will be more likely to listen to the dictates of his own understanding than to the decisions of his Maker. The general corruption of mankind is nevertheless 'so easily discoverable, that nothing but the desert or the cell can exclude it from notice. The knowledge of crimes intrudes uncalled and undesired. They whom their abstraction from common occurrences

hinders from seeing iniquity, will quickly have their attention awakened by feeling it. Even he who ventures not into the world, may learn its corruption in the closet. For what are treatises of morality, but persuasives to the practice of duties, for which no arguments would be necessary, but that we are continually tempted to violate or neglect them? What are all the records of history, but narratives of successive villanies, of treasons and usurpations, massacres and wars !'

There are, in fact, but two kingdoms in the world: the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ; and to one or the other of these kingdoms we belong. The subjects of the former are, in scripture language, denominated Sinners, and those of the latter, Saints. Satan is expressly called the god of this world; and is described as the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. He saith to one, Do this, and he doeth it: to another, Go, and he goeth. The soul is imperceptibly taken captive by him at his will: and though there be, in various respects, great dif-

ference of character, as to moral worth, between the subjects over whom he reigns, yet the destruction of both soul and body, which is the end of his government, is as effectually secured in the comparatively good, as in those who are abandonedly wicked. It is therefore highly necessary that you should endeavour to distinguish between mere morality and real holiness: for though it is true that there can be no religion without integrity of heart, and rectitude of conduct as its fruit; there may nevertheless be an appearance of devotion, a conduct that is in many things exemplary, and yet no religion.

Accurately speaking, religion does not consist in 'the reverence of bodily demeanour, nor in the exercise of shining gifts,' but in the devout disposition of the heart towards God. As a principle of action, it is of divine origin; and produces in the soul where it is predominant a deep sense of personal guilt, and of absolute unworthiness—an habitual reverence of the divine Majesty—unfeigned love of the divine Government—entire confidence in divine Mercy

revealed in Jesus Christ; and unreserved submission to the divine Will. Of the real existence of this heavenly principle in the heart, an uniformly pious life is unquestionably the best evidence; and yet this alone will not afford unequivocal testimony that the subject is influenced by its benign agency. Some men are so constituted as to feel, comparatively, no inclination to be vicious. They have, in a general view, no vice to gratify; or to speak with greater precision, God restrains the heart, as in the case of Abimelech, so as to suppress the desire of committing those sins to which it would otherwise be liable; and the efficacy of this restraint is sometimes so great, that there will be, apparently, but little difference between the real and the nominal christian. ‘They may, as an excellent prelate remarks, both live outwardly without blame, and shine in a sphere above the ordinary sort of men, and yet the one be a star and the other but a meteor. The highway may be as dry and as fair in frosty weather, as in a warm summer; but there is a great difference in the cause of it: in summer, the sun dries up the moisture; in winter, the frost binds it in.

So the ways of those who are under the power of restraint, may be as fair as that of those who are truly sanctified ; but the cause is vastly different: grace has dried up the filth of the one, but only bound in the filth of the other.' This may be called negative goodness; but religion, as it respects the heart, is a thing totally distinct.

The universal depravity of human nature is awful and affecting ; but the calamity is abundantly heightened by considering that men are insensible of spiritual danger, and have neither inclination nor power to alter their condition. They are, in scripture language, Without strength, without hope, and without God in the world ; and in this deplorable state all the posterity of Adam might have been left to perish, without any impeachment of the Divine goodness or the Divine holiness: for whatever estimate men may now form of their own moral worth, the period is coming when 'every mouth will be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.' But that all should perish, was not the

will of the Great Supreme. Out of this lapsed state, it was his sovereign pleasure to select a church that should be in time and throughout eternity, to the praise of the glory of his grace. To effect the redemption of the individuals that compose this church, his own Son became incarnate; underwent, throughout the whole of life, the indignities of shame and reproach, and expired at last, as their surety, in ignominy on a cross. To complete this plan of unmerited benevolence and grace, the Holy Spirit is mercifully sent to enlighten their understandings; to sanctify their hearts; and to qualify them for the enjoyment of that blessedness to which they were eternally chosen.

These astonishing facts account for that striking difference of character and of conduct perceivable in the world. A man perhaps who was shamefully abandoned, becomes at once serious, devout, and exemplary. Another, whose manners have been uniformly decent, is seen mourning the depravity of his nature and the imperfections of his life. A third, prostrate

before God, is heard lamenting that, while his general deportment before men has been comparatively blameless, his heart was nevertheless a stranger to that ardent love towards him, which he now perceives to be his duty and his happiness. These men, who were once at ease in their sins; all alive to the world; lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, now see its vanity and its emptiness: they feel and acknowledge the propriety of that salutary exhortation, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' They know by experience that the 'friendship of the world is enmity with God; and that whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'

'Through the whole of the New Testament, there is a direct opposition stated between the world and the disciples of Christ: an opposition of character, an opposition of interest, and a continual conflict in consequence of both.' It no longer appears strange to the christian,

that he who is 'after the flesh, should persecute him that is after the spirit;' nay, it would be strange were it otherwise: and on this principle proceeded the cautionary language of Jesus: 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

Now, Melissa, these are the persons who have obtained mercy: that are called to be Saints—to be a peculiar people to show forth the praises of him who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. They have received the spirit of adoption, and are made acceptable in the Beloved. To you, therefore, as one of this happy number, surely I may, on the present occasion, accommodate the apostolic exhortation, 'Be not unequally yoked together with an unbeliever: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with

darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God! as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

It may perhaps be justly remarked, that the words of the Apostle have no reference to marriage, but to the joining in church communion with idolaters. But then it has been very properly asked, 'Will not marriage make them yoke-fellows? Can you suppose that it was permitted to marry with them, and at the same time commanded to come out from among them and be separate? Not to touch the unclean thing, and yet to make it bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh? Is there no concord between

Christ and Belial, and shall they become both one? Hath the temple of God no agreement with idols? and shall I make an idol possessor of that temple, and marry a member of Christ to the daughter of a strange god?

If, then, the Lord hath made a difference between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not! let me ask, and appeal to your understanding and your conscience—Is it seemly—would it be acting in character as an heir of glory, to give your hand to one whom you must consider, not only as a stranger, but as possessing a carnal mind, which is enmity against the God whom you ardently love and unfeignedly worship? You have, remember, enlisted under his banner: you have acknowledged him as your Lawgiver and your King: you have adopted the language of those who exclaimed, Other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. You have made a good profession before many witnesses, and have joined yourself to the Lord and to his people in a perpetual covenant that

shall never be forgotten. You are not your own, but are bought with a price : not with corruptible things, as silver and gold ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ! Esteem it therefore your duty and your privilege to honour and glorify God with your body and with your spirit, which are his. He has, in great mercy, translated you out of the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of his dear Son. He hath brought you out of darkness into marvellous light : walk therefore as a child of light. Act consistently with your high and heavenly calling ; for where should Christ be honoured but in his own dominions, and by his own subjects ? Never let the world suspect that the marvellous light you enjoy cannot exhibit one subject in his kingdom to whom you can cordially give your hand and your heart. This would be indeed to grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness ! Who will believe that the darkness is past, and that the true light now shineth, when one of its daughters, who might enjoy the freedom and the happiness of alliance with a

subject of her new Sovereign, is seen returning to those regions of darkness and of cruelty where she was once bound as a slave, in order to join affinity with a vassal of her former tyrant? This would be to act the traitor indeed—‘to strengthen the hands of the wicked—to grieve the hearts of the righteous whom the Lord hath not made sad—to cause the virgins of Jerusalem to hang down their heads, and to say to each other in the language of Naomi—Behold, thy sister is gone back unto her people and her gods!’ But this be far from you: may it be the sentiment of your heart, and the language of your tongue; ‘Deliver me, O Lord, from the wicked—from men of the world, who have their portion in this life—The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour—the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight.’ Adopt the words and imitate the conduct of the pious and amiable Ruth. ‘Intreat me not to leave, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest,

will I die, and there will I be buried ; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.' To say or to act otherwise, must excite suspicion respecting your real character as a christian, and give sufficient reason to question whether you ever cordially esteemed either your Sovereign or his subjects.

If, Melissa, you have ever been led to contemplate the awful state in which you were, when without hope and without God in the world : if the views you now have of yourself and of those who are in a state of nature be totally changed : if you cannot run with them, as in days past, to the same excess, nor partake without guilt of the same pleasures ; what happiness can be reasonably expected in a relation that is undoubtedly the nearest, and the most important of all earthly connexions ? You have joys of which the partner of your life cannot participate : you have sorrows, the source of which he cannot explore, of which he can bear no part, and which, had he inclination, he could neither remove nor alleviate. But this is not

all : you will feel the most bitter anguish in reflecting that the beloved object of your heart lives estranged from that God, in whose favour you experience there is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life. You cannot but anticipate with the most pungent grief, that awful period which shall dissolve the tenderest ties ; that may probably perpetuate to him the misery it has been your constant endeavour to avert, and the fear of his enduring which, has imbittered all the sweets of domestic life !

But suppose, for a moment, that after marriage, the man who is now obsequious and pliable, should unexpectedly become perverse and obstinate ! Suppose, which is possible, that your views of religion should meet with virulent opposition ; and that they shall not, you can have no positive security ; for it ever was and ever will be a truth, that ‘ he that is born after the flesh, will persecute him that is born after the spirit.’ It is impossible, in the very nature of things, that an unconverted man should love a pious heavenly-minded woman as such : and

this dislike is so perfectly natural, that it would excite astonishment to find it otherwise: because firm attachment to divine truth, and ardent love of the divine character, will always produce a life eminently devout and singular. The new convert can no longer conform to the sinful customs and maxims of the world: and it is this glaring singularity, opposed to her former conduct, and to the conduct of others in a state of nature, that renders her, not simply as a woman, but as a conscientious disciple of her Master, an object of dislike. Hence the persecution of the apostles and primitive christians: hence the sufferings endured by those of whom the world was not worthy; and hence much of that hatred and opposition which attended the whole life of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: and surely the 'disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they so call them of his household?'

To the enchanting voice of applause most men listen with grateful attention : and he that shall love the praise of men more than the praise of God, will spare no expense to procure it. But let the christian remember that the friendship of the world is not to be easily purchased. Its demands are exorbitant in the extreme, and the amity to be enjoyed inadequate to the price. He must, if a candidate for unanimous esteem, cheerfully comply with every requisition : he must not even attempt to be more abstemious or religious than his neighbour : he must relinquish his present pursuits, sacrifice a good conscience, abandon the society of the faithful, and forfeit the approbation of Him that said, ‘ Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake.’

It is easier to reconcile antipathies in nature than in religion. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? ‘ When, there-

fore, we have combined fire and water without extinction of each other, and made an amity between the dove and the hawk, between the wasp and the bee, so that the one shall not infest the other; then may we promise ourselves success in attempting to make up the breach between the sinner and the saint.' And the reason is obvious: for, as Solomon expresses it, 'they that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.'

Your deportment, as a christian, would be considered by such a character, as a perpetual libel on the frame of his heart and the tenor of his life: especially when reflecting how opposite your views of his real state were to those of his own. Nay, prejudice might so far prevail, as to induce him to believe that his conduct was watched in order to be exposed or re-proved; that his principles of action might possibly be charged with duplicity; and that where there was such dissimilarity of sentiment, there could be neither union of soul, nor cordial attachment. This supposition is far from impro-

bable; and in excuse, you might in vain plead the tender solicitude you felt for the promotion of his best interests. He would perceive no occasion for alarm, no danger to escape; and must therefore view the disturber of his quiet as either daringly rude, or impertinently officious. If, says the prophet, 'favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.' Nay, he might perhaps be led to consider all your zeal for his future happiness, as the effect of superstition or enthusiasm; and therefore think it his duty to prevent your attendance on the ordinances of God's house; or at least from attending where it would be your duty and your interest to worship.

No pious woman, I think, can reasonably hope to form a connexion of this kind, without sacrificing some of the privileges she has been accustomed to enjoy; and no one is perhaps more to be regretted, or if retained, no one more likely to be interrupted, than that which is en-

joyed in those stated intervals when the soul retires from the cares and bustle of the world, to place itself more immediately in the presence of Him that searcheth the reins and the heart. In this asylum, sacred to contemplation and reflection, the heart can without reserve unbosom itself to him that said, 'Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' In these moments of abstraction and devotion, the ruder passions are commanded into silence; the believer can sometimes say to them, and to every intruder, as Abraham did to his servants; Abide ye here, whilst I go and worship yonder. When this is happily the case, solemnity reigns, and peace triumphs. The devout worshipper anticipates the felicity of heaven. She feels what it is to enter into the joy of her Lord—to realize his favour to be life, and his lovingkindness to be better than life. She appropriates with grateful confidence, the blessings of grace and of glory; and longs for the period when the body of sin and of death shall be effectually destroyed; when mortality shall be swallowed

up of life, and the soul be put in full possession of its joy!

But should these delightful seasons of communion with the Father of mercies be secured from interruption; with what reluctance must the christian quit her peaceful solitude to enter the house divided against itself!—where nothing of God, or that savours of religion, can meet the smile of approbation—where the sneer of contempt is perpetually grieving the heart, or the sullen frown checking that social intercourse which was graciously intended as the balm of domestic life.

But the infelicity peculiar to such marriages is not merely personal: it frequently extends to every branch of the family; and if there be children, the believing wife will find her troubles rapidly increase. New difficulties will occur respecting domestic duties, and also respecting some branches of instruction supposed necessary to complete the modern system of education. Her views of both will be different, and

in some things opposite to those of her husband: and in matters of religion this difference will be greatly augmented. Every attempt to impress the tender mind with the worth of divine things, may be thought ill-timed or improper: or may be soon effaced by those amusements and vanities which he may consider as perfectly innocent, and a part of his duty to make them participate. This disagreement concerning the same things, will be easily perceived by the children; and respecting those denominated worldly pleasures, you might in vain solicit attention to arguments designed to enforce restraint; for restraint, in their view, must repress desire and preclude enjoyment: but it would be perfectly natural for them to concur with the wishes of their father without hesitancy; because those wishes would correspond with that love of terrestrial delights, the possession of which both old and young, rich and poor, too frequently regard as the completion of happiness.

That children need nothing to counteract pious endeavours to promote their everlasting

welfare, I will not attempt to prove. You must be convinced, that to effect even an appearance of virtue, is a task of great labour—a task which, when faithfully performed, is frequently performed in vain : and if this be acknowledged, as I think it must ; what success can be reasonably expected in attempting to impress the mind with the worth of divine truth, when jarring opinions are formed of its importance and its use ; and when the pupil must discover that the precepts as well as the examples of his tutors are perpetually at variance !

But, to enumerate the trials to which a child of God may be exposed in such a connexion, would be endless. They are, besides, of such magnitude and so various, as to make it matter of astonishment that a real saint should ever think of happiness where the prospect of misery is so abundantly greater : not to mention the flagrant violation of a divine precept—of positive law in this case provided.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

‘ To grasp at happiness is all our view,
Through diff’rent tracks her footsteps we pursue ;
While each his own fallacious path approves,
As int’rest leads, or inclination moves :
Yet most through error lose the wish’d-for way,
Who sets out wrong must wander far astray.’

NOTWITHSTANDING what has been said in the preceding letters, you urge, That reciprocal esteem and affection are essential to happiness ; and that you cannot meet with a person, in the circle of your religious connexions, with whom you can promise yourself the enjoyment of felicity. Strange indeed ! that among the many thousands of God’s Israel, there should not be one whose person and accomplishments can find access to your heart !

It is not, says an elegant writer, ‘ often difficult to find a suitable companion, if every man would be content with such as he is qualified

to please. But if vanity tempts him to forsake his rank, and post himself among those with whom no common interest or mutual pleasure can ever unite him, he must always live in a state of unsocial separation, without tenderness and without trust.'

Suppose, however, you were to leave the church and return to the world ; are you certain that the difficulty would be entirely removed? The number of individuals, it is true, would be greater ; for in a detached view, the flock of Christ ever was, and still continues to be comparatively small. But it is possible, even among men of the world, that the object of desire might feel no reciprocal attachment, and could therefore never be enjoyed : and you would attempt in vain to sooth the sorrows of disappointment by the remembrance of there yet being unbounded diversity of choice ; because no positive assurance could be obtained that the man would solicit attention, who was, in all respects, what capricious fancy might denominate the standard of excellence.

‘ A woman, in this country, says Dr. Gregory, may easily prevent the first impressions of love, and every motive of prudence and delicacy should make her guard her heart against them, till such time as she has received the most convincing proofs of the attachment of a man of such merit, as will justify a reciprocal regard.— Your heart indeed may be shut, inflexibly and permanently, against all the merit a man can possess. That may be your misfortune, but cannot be your fault. In such a situation, you would be equally unjust to yourself and your lover, if you gave him your hand when your heart revolted against him. But miserable will be your fate, if you allow an attachment to steal on you before you are sure of a return ; or, what is infinitely worse, where there are wanting those qualities which alone can insure happiness in a married state.’

I am, nevertheless, willing to admit that the objection produced is popular and specious : and were it allowable to extenuate a breach of divine law when committed to gratify the claims of affection, much, in reference to your

sex, might be said apparently plausible. They frequently may not have it in their power to gratify the wishes of the heart: but with man it is otherwise. Custom has conferred on him the exclusive privilege of selection. He may deliberate before he determine; and if denied admission to one object, he can retire without the shame of disgrace; and when time shall efface the impression that compelled him to hazard a refusal, he may solicit access to another without fear of reproach, or the imputation of caprice. For him therefore who shall, while avowedly a disciple of Christ, attach himself to one who is a stranger to his gospel and his grace, no apology can with decency be made. His conduct is highly criminal indeed! he bids defiance to restraint: and without having it in his power to assign any admissible pretext to remove, or even to palliate his guilt, tramples on that authority which has graciously interposed to show him the path of duty and of happiness!

Is there, it may be asked, no self-denial attached to the christian profession when the

commands of Christ oppose the gratification of irregular desires? Are the disciples of the despised Galilean to expect no trials—to encounter no difficulties—to conflict with no enemy? Whence then that admonitory caution, If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Remember Him, Melissa, who, in doing the will of his heavenly Father, pleased not himself, but bore reproach, and chastened his soul with fasting—who made sackcloth his garment, and became the song of the drunkard—who had gall for his meat, and vinegar for drink; and who said to his followers, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Were the mind properly affected with the consideration of these important facts, surely the astonishing condescension of our blessed Lord would constrain us to acknowledge that one end of his death was, that the objects of his love should not ‘henceforth live unto them-

selves, but unto him that died for them :’ and if in this instance a sacrifice must be made, make it with cheerfulness : spare no sinful inclination, however importunate to be gratified. Cut off, as one expresses it, the right hand when lifted up to plead for mercy ; pluck out the right eye, though it shed tears to move compassion and excite forbearance.

To him that is desirous of keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, self-denial is so far from being considered as a burden, that he sees it expedient, and feels it his duty, sometimes to renounce the enjoyment of things in themselves lawful. ‘ And he who restrains himself in the use of things lawful, will never encroach upon things forbidden. Abstinence, if nothing more, is, at least, a cautious retreat from the utmost verge of permission, and confers that security which cannot be reasonably hoped by him that dares always to hover over the precipice of destruction, or delights to approach the pleasures which he knows it fatal to partake.’

That the objection produced has considerable weight, I am willing to allow; and yet, weighty as it is, there have been cases where it could not be admitted in excuse. Let me ask, Whether you think it would have been judged valid, had it been urged by the ancient Israelites in opposition to the injunctions of Jehovah respecting their intermarrying with the Canaanitish nations? Certainly not: and yet they had equal right to urge it as a bar to happiness, unless it can be proved that what you consider as essential to conjugal felicity was not so to them.

It may perhaps be said, That there were reasons of a political nature for this prohibition; that these are now abrogated, and of course, that the same reasons for a similar practice cannot exist. But this argument, plausible as it may seem, will not, if admitted, serve the cause it is intended to support. For it matters not whether the grounds of that restriction were civil, religious, or of a mixed nature; because the prohibition might be as firm a barrier against what a Jew might think essential to the

completion of his happiness, as the objection above is to that of the christian. And indeed so ungovernable were these people, and so impetuous in pursuing carnal enjoyments, that, in violation of the divine command, They took the daughters of the land to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. They were, as the Psalmist expresses it, mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

This aversion from restraint, Melissa, is neither peculiar to the Christian nor the Jew. Its claim to antiquity rises much higher. It was awfully prevalent before the flood. The sons of God then saw the daughters of men that they were fair; they could not bear the limits prescribed by Jehovah; they over-leaped the bound—they took them wives of all which they chose, and rushed to imaginary happiness and to real ruin in the same instant!

The truth is, we first form attachments, and then ask what is duty; whereas the inquiry should be reversed. We should say to the

Lord, respecting the unconverted, as the prophet once did concerning the adversaries of Israel; 'We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name:' and were the mind suitably impressed with a sense of this fact; with a deep conviction of its obligation to divine goodness, and of its entire dependence on divine favour, we should not be precipitate in an affair of such vast importance.

It should ever be remembered, 'that houses and riches are the inheritance of fathers; but that a prudent wife is from the Lord:' and the christian who habitually lives under the influence of this delightful truth, and is desirous of finding a suitable companion, will not fail to seek his direction. Such a man will not have to struggle with insuperable difficulties in attempting to keep his desires within due bounds; nor will he have reason to complain that the limits prescribed are so narrow as to contain no objects on which choice may deliberate with pleasure. There is in the garden of God, a vast variety of fruit; and his taste must be vitiated

indeed, that can find no enjoyment but in eating such as is forbidden !

The question in this, as well as in every other case, should not simply be, whether the object desired will be grateful to me, or not : but whether attachment to it will meet the approbation of Him whose I am, whom I profess to esteem and to reverence, and to whose revealed will implicit subjection is an indispensable duty ?

Perhaps we are not aware, or do not always attentively consider, that the human passions are often imperceptibly under the direction of a wrong bias. But this is undoubtedly the case when the love of beauty is permitted to supersede every other consideration. That personal charms are both pleasing and attractive cannot be denied. But who that is in search of happiness would seek it in the bloom that every breath may blast, and which time will certainly efface ! He, however, that is determined at all events to please the eye, would do well to consider that, enchanting as Beauty is,

she cannot always boast of conquest without auxiliaries: she is frequently somewhat indebted for her fascinating power to novelty; and, where there is not freedom of access, somewhat also to restraint. We are naturally anxious to taste the pleasures that are known to be forbidden: the very prohibition stimulates desire, and induces a belief that more is to be enjoyed than experience will warrant. But let it be remembered, that familiarity with the most engaging objects does not always strengthen attachment: for this attachment, instead of being augmented by fruition, is too frequently diminished: and this will ever be the case when no regard is paid to those qualities that are essential to permanent esteem, and without which no enjoyment can be long secured from satiety and disgust.

‘ The finest features, ranged in the most exact symmetry, and heightened by the most blooming complexion, must, says an elegant writer, be animated before they can strike: and when they are animated, will generally

excite the same passions which they express. If they are fixed in the dead calm of insensibility, they will be examined without emotion; and if they do not express kindness, they will be beheld without love. Looks of contempt, disdain, or malevolence, will be reflected, as from a mirror, by every countenance on which they are turned; and if a wanton aspect excite desire, it is but like that of a savage for his prey, which cannot be gratified without the destruction of its object.

‘The lover is generally at a loss to define the beauty by which his passion was suddenly and irresistibly determined to a particular object; but this could never happen, if it depended upon any known rule of proportion, upon the shape or disposition of the features, or the colour of the skin: he tells you, that it is something which he cannot fully express, something not fixed in any part, but diffused over the whole; he calls it a sweetness, a softness, a placid sensibility, or gives it some other appellation which connects beauty with sentiment,

and expresses a charm which is not peculiar to any set of features, but is perhaps possible to all.

‘ This beauty, however, does not always consist in smiles, but varies as expressions of meekness and kindness vary with their objects ; it is extremely forcible in the silent complaint of patient sufferance, the tender solicitude of friendship, and the glow of filial obedience ; and in tears, whether of joy, of pity, or of grief, it is almost irresistible.

‘ This is the charm which captivates without the aid of nature, and without which her utmost bounty is ineffectual. But it cannot be assumed as a mask to conceal insensibility or malevolence ; it must be the effect of corresponding sentiments, or it will impress upon the countenance a new and more disgusting deformity, AFFECTATION.—Looks which do not correspond with the heart, cannot be assumed without labour, nor continued without pain ; the motive to relinquish them must, therefore, soon preponderate, and the aspect

and apparel of the visit will be laid by together; the smiles and the languishments of art will vanish, and the fierceness of rage, or the gloom of discontent, will either obscure or destroy all the elegance of symmetry and complexion.

‘ The artificial aspect is, indeed, as wretched a substitute for the expression of sentiment, as the smear of paint for the blushes of health; it is not only equally transient, and equally liable to detection; but as paint leaves the countenance yet more withered and ghastly, the passions burst out with more violence after restraint, the features become more distorted, and excite more determined aversion.

‘ Beauty, therefore, depends principally upon the mind, and consequently may be influenced by education. It has been remarked, that the predominant passion may generally be discovered in the countenance; because the muscles by which it is expressed, being almost perpetually contracted, lose their tone, and never totally relax; so that the expression remains when

the passion is suspended; thus an angry, a disdainful, a subtle, and a suspicious temper, is displayed in characters that are almost universally understood. It is equally true of the pleasing and the softer passions, that they leave their signatures upon the countenance when they cease to act: the prevalence of these passions, therefore, produces a mechanical effect upon the aspect, and gives a turn and cast to the features which make a more favourable and forcible impression upon the mind of others, than any charm produced by mere external causes.

‘Neither does the beauty which depends upon temper and sentiment, equally endanger the possessor; it is, to use an eastern metaphor, ‘like the towers of a city, not only an ornament, but a defence.’ if it excite desire, it at once controls and refines it; it represses with awe, it softens with delicacy, and it wins to imitation. The love of reason and of virtue is mingled with the love of beauty; because this beauty is little more than the emanation of in-

tellectual excellence, which is not an object of corporeal appetite. As it excites a purer passion, it also more forcibly engages to fidelity: every man finds himself more powerfully restrained from giving pain to goodness than to beauty: and every look of a countenance in which they are blended, in which beauty is the expression of goodness, is a silent reproach to the first irregular wish; and the purpose immediately appears to be disingenuous and cruel, by which the tender hope of ineffable affection would be disappointed, the placid confidence of unsuspecting simplicity abused, and the peace even of virtue endangered, by the most sordid infidelity, and the breach of the strongest obligations.

‘ But the hope of the hypocrite must perish. When the factitious beauty has laid by her smiles; when the lustre of her eyes and the bloom of her cheeks have lost their influence with their novelty; what remains but a tyrant divested of power, who will never be seen without a mixture of indignation and disdain?

The only desire which this object could gratify, will be transferred to another, not only without reluctance, but with triumph.

‘ Let it, therefore, be remembered, that none can be disciples of the GRACES, but in the school of VIRTUE; and that those who wish to be LOVELY, must learn early to be GOOD.’

There are perhaps few things concerning which we have more constant proof, and of which we need to be so frequently reminded, as that the youth and the beauty of those who are courted, and of those that court, cannot long be secured from the ravages of time. Age, disease, or a thousand incidents over which we have no control, may deface the fairest form. In choosing a partner for life, we should therefore never lose sight of those moral qualities that are deserving of esteem, and without which a passion worthy the name of love cannot exist.

That the hand should neither be given nor received in marriage when there is between

the parties any personal dislike, is unquestionably right ; but it does not hence follow that, in order to be loved, both or either of them, must be exquisitely handsome. There are individuals of both sexes, who are very far from being eminent for beauty, whose engaging manners indicate such native frankness, such good sense, such unaffected piety and benignity of heart ; such sweetness of temper, such nice decorum, and such refined delicacy as cannot be easily resisted : and whenever these are beheld, we see an object worthy of attachment ; and if that attachment be strengthened by the ties of marriage, charms are effectually secured which will keep alive the tenderest regard—which will give lustre to the age when the bloom of youth is past, and exist in the memory and the heart, when the beloved object itself is mouldering in the grave.

It is a mortifying consideration to human pride, and yet not more mortifying than true, that sin is so interwoven in our nature, and has so perverted both the taste and the judgment, that we sometimes call evil good, and

good evil: we put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. We are, in scripture language, wise in our own eyes, and prudent in our own sight; when, alas! we know nothing as we ought.

What the rudder is to the ship, should the judgment be to the passions. But alas! who can hope to arrive in safety at the desired haven, when he that should steer the vessel is himself unmindful of his duty, or unable to perform it? who shall be so remiss, as to suffer every adverse breeze to divert him from his course: who, to gratify the wishes of his passengers, shall, at all hazards, consult their ease more than their safety; and so far forget his engagements, as to participate of the amusements intended to solace the wearisome hours of migration; unmindful, at the same time, of the current that is driving him on rocks and shoals: and who, when apprized of his situation and his danger, shall possess neither skill nor courage to rescue his charge from the perils that surround them.

It is not without good reason that we are so repeatedly exhorted in scripture not to lean to our own understanding ; not to be wise in our own eyes, nor to trust our own hearts. All admonitions of this nature strongly inculcate, by implication at least, our native ignorance, and the need there is of imploring divine direction in every affair on which the judgment may be called to determine. We should therefore say, with Job, That which I know not, teach thou me ; and, in the present case, of our conduct as the Psalmist did of his mouth, ‘ I am purposed that it shall not transgress.’ If the God whom I serve, and delight to honour, have said thus, or thus, it is enough ; I cheerfully acquiesce : I desire that my will may in all things bow to his sceptre, and not his sceptre to my will. For such acquiescence there is the highest reason imaginable : because the will of God is, in every determination, under the guidance of infinite wisdom, and is the ‘ sole rule and measure of all his actions towards his creatures, as his word is of their actions towards Him.’ Whatever he wills, is holy, just, and good ; and is therefore called, That good,

and acceptable, and perfect will of God. What-ever he requires of us, 'is pure and equitable; agreeable to the dictates of right illuminated reason; so that we act more like men when we act most like christians, and show ourselves most rational when we show ourselves most religious.'

The most eminent saint is incompetent to judge, in any case, what is best adapted to promote his interest and his happiness: it is therefore always seemly, always right for him to say, with David, Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk—make thy way straight before me; and it would be honourable indeed, could he add with him, in another place, Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee—O let me not wander from thy commandments—Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

It is perhaps one of our chief mercies to be sometimes denied the possession of those things which we are most anxious to enjoy. It is not

that which appears to us most pleasing, and best adapted to procure felicity, that will always obtain it ; but frequently the reverse. The ancient Jews undoubtedly promised themselves much happiness in marrying strange wives of their own choosing ; but painful experience taught them otherwise : for when the hand of God was upon them for this sin ; they could acknowledge their conduct to be wrong ; they could lie in the dust and cry, ‘ We have sinned against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land to increase the trespass of Israel.’

Such confessions as these, Melissa, are not peculiar to the ancient Israelites. There have been professing christians in every age since christianity was known, who have imprudently followed their example ; who, like them, in the hour of distress, have pathetically lamented the folly of their conduct, and who, when too late, have felt the force of that divine exclamation — ‘ O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ! then had thy peace been as a river,

and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.' Your friend has seen many of this description. Some, who by marrying ungodly men, have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience: some, who while they retained the form, had lost the power of godliness: some, who have been admonished for remissness of conduct—for a total neglect of the means of grace; and who have pleaded in excuse, the restraints of a man that hated the least appearance of devotion: but never, that he recollects, one who retained that ardent love to divine things, which, before marriage, had been remarkably conspicuous.

It may be said in this case, as well, perhaps, as in any other, that the man and his associates are generally alike: or at least thus much may be safely affirmed; that such heterogeneous connexions are extremely hurtful to religion—that she who departs from the path of duty, forsakes her own mercies; and that, if she do not finally apostatize and fall into ruin, it is not owing to circumspection of conduct, but to the aboundings of that grace which triumphs over human depravity and human guilt; and which

is gloriously exalted in saving the chief of sinners.

In forming connexions for the purposes of trade or of commerce, the children of this world act more providently. How anxious are they to select individuals who are pleased with the same prospects, animated by the same hopes, and with whom they can cordially act to secure the end for which their fortunes and their talents are united.

It will perhaps be said, That the pious woman who marries a merely nominal christian is not less provident, because this step is considered as essential to her happiness. But if any thing more than sensual enjoyment be expected, the mean is not adapted to the end: for attachment in this case is not to the mind, but to the exterior of the man: and were she to remember that the views she once had of herself and of others, in a state of nature, were very different from those that now animate her heart; she might soon discover that there is no foundation for agreement: that this difference

would produce discordant opinions; and that, if these opinions did not interdict felicity, they would certainly obstruct it.—For what can be reasonably expected ‘but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment?’

Whenever a christian woman (and the same may be said with equal, if not with much greater propriety of the christian man) begins to think it a matter of little importance whether the object of her choice be really a converted person or not, provided his external demeanour be uniformly decent, she has abundant reason to believe that her love to God and his government is rapidly declining. It is not in the moment of grateful attachment to the Father of mercies, that we think of making a league with his enemies: this treachery occurs in the hour of forgetfulness—when the heart is cold and barren; when formality usurps the throne of re-

ligion, and when nothing is seen but the semblance of piety!

You know him, Melissa, who, while in an unconverted state, was passionately fond of a woman whose beauty and accomplishments were remarkably conspicuous. To the gratification of this passion, nothing was wanting but the concurrence of one, to whose will he owed the most implicit regard. This concurrence, however, could never be obtained. He pined after the darling of his heart in silence and solitude, till death removed the bar to his happiness, and left him at liberty to pursue, without hindrance, the object of his wishes. But this mournful event opened new scenes for contemplation. The demise of his friend was instrumental to the life of his soul. Other objects engrossed his attention and his heart: and though he never lost sight of the worth, nor of the personal charms of her that first enagaged his affections; yet, never did he feel equal thankfulness on any temporal occasion, as in being prevented, by this affecting occurrence, from giving his hand to

one, for whom the riches of both the Indies would have been once cheerfully relinquished. He now found his views of God, of himself, and of her, with regard to religion, totally changed ; nor could the whole world have induced him to think, as formerly, that happiness and Stella were inseparably united : and I have no doubt but that if you experience a lively sense of the same divine goodness, you will cheerfully say concerning the righteous—‘ Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.’

I am,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

Order is heaven's first law ; and this confess,
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest ;
More rich, more wise : but who infers from hence,
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.

POPE.

YOU ask, Philetus, whether a person in your circumstances ought not, in choosing a wife, to make money a necessary article, since without it little respect or happiness can be expected in the present life ? Fully to answer this very interesting question would require more room than is generally allowed for epistolary conveyance : I will, however, transmit you my thoughts on the subject with all the freedom and conciseness that I can.

‘ Whoever, says an elegant writer, finds himself incited, by some violent impulse of passion, to pursue riches as the chief end of being, should stop and consider whether he is about

to engage in an undertaking that will reward his toil. When therefore the desire of wealth is taking hold of the heart, let us look round and see how it operates upon those whose industry, or fortune, has obtained it. When we find them oppressed with their own abundance, luxurious without pleasure, idle without ease, impatient and querulous in themselves, and despised or hated by the rest of mankind, we shall soon be convinced that if the real wants of our condition are satisfied, there remains little to be sought with solicitude, or desired with eagerness. He must, therefore, expect to be wretched, who pays to beauty, riches, or politeness, that regard which only virtue and piety can claim.'

The distribution of terrestrial good is wisely regulated by the providence of God. Some individuals are enriched with abundance; some have all the comforts, but none of the superfluities of life; some have merely the things needful to subsistence, while others, equally deserving, have scarcely where to lay their heads. 'The Lord maketh poor, and maketh

rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up;—and who may say unto him, What doest thou? The man, therefore, who rejects a woman merely because she is not enriched with abundance, rejects, besides the woman, the providence of God.

Were every man to expect a large dowry with his wife, what must become of by far the greater, and perhaps the most amiable part of the fairer sex? They must be constrained to exist without answering the end for which they were created; and man, influenced by a principle unnatural and unjust, would live deprived of that society and intercourse which soften the rudeness of his manners, and which were graciously intended as the balm of life.

But that I may be serviceable to you in this particular, I shall wave a minute investigation of the subject for the present, and direct your attention to the word and the providence of God.

Every serious and considerate man must trace

the marks of an invisible hand in all the paths and the vicissitudes of life. He must acknowledge that 'it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;—yea, he will rejoice to find they are ordered by the Lord, who delighteth in his way:' and were we more observant of the hand of providence, and of the precepts graciously given for the regulation of our conduct, many of our inquiries would be needless; we should see the path marked out before us; and if, through mistake, we should turn either to the right hand or to the left, there is reason to conclude that we should not long be suffered to wander from his statutes.

The first inquiry then is, Whether you are walking in the path that providence hath allotted? If so, your way is clear, and your duty plain. To ask whether poverty or riches may ensue, or what sort of figure you are to make in life, is a matter about which you are not to be concerned. It is your business to cast all your cares upon God, who careth for you. The ordering and the success of all future events belong to him, and must be left to his disposal.

But here it may be asked, How am I to know when I tread the path that providence has allotted? For an answer to this difficult and important question I must appeal to yourself. That the subject to which it relates has led you to implore the direction of heaven, I can have no doubt. If therefore the bestowment of what has been devoutly sought, will be for your good and for the divine glory, there is ground to believe that the path of duty will not be so hidden as to afford no mark by which it may be known.

I will therefore suppose, Philetus, that, after having persevered in supplicating the Almighty for guidance in this momentous concern, you have found a woman in the circle of your acquaintance who, as to religion and personal accomplishments, is every way suited to your wishes. Your judgment, your reason, and your affections plead in her behalf, and convince you that she is formed to make you happy. By some means or other you have also reason to believe, that an application on your part would produce in her an attachment equal to your

own. Now if this be the case, why should you hesitate? Why not rather view her as the answer to prayer, and in faith make her an offer of your hand and of your heart in marriage?

But on inquiry, it seems, this amiable woman is found destitute of that earthly dust which blinds the votaries of wealth to natural and moral qualities, and which, while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. And does the want of this dust urge Philetus to desist? If so, his conduct is commendable, provided she be interdicted in the bible for her poverty; but if not, it is pretty evident that money was the principal object of pursuit, not the woman, and money should have been the subject of his prayers.

In those, indeed, who sacrifice every thing to wealth, such a conduct would be perfectly consistent: with them, a virtuous woman, and a woman with a large fortune mean the same thing: but with those who are actuated by

nobler principles, such considerations will have no weight. If, Philetus, the object of your choice be enriched with grace, and is in every other respect calculated to promote your happiness, can you reject her for not having what providence withholds ! Surely it would be more consistent to exclaim with the poet :

Detested be the wealth that can destroy
My utmost hope of earthly joy !
Thy gifts, O fortune, I resign,
Let her and poverty be mine !

I know it is said, That when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window. But why should this be thought strange ? The marriages to which the remark is applicable were originally not so much a contract between person and person, as between person and property : if therefore the ghastly intruder was seen to enter, what wonder that love should in any way perceptibly escape to fly in quest of its darling object !

Poverty, however, is a state in which no wise man would choose to involve himself, much less

the woman of his heart. There may indeed be cases in which this calamity is unavoidable, and in which reciprocal attachment may suffer no diminution; but this consolation cannot reasonably be expected by him who shall precipitate a woman into difficulties of which she perhaps never heard, and which the tenderest solicitude and the most unwearied exertions might in vain labour to remove.

The bulk of mankind are indeed far removed from a state of affluence, and the majority must inevitably unite in marriage with no other prospect of subsistence but what the hand of labour can supply: but this consideration will by no means justify the bringing a woman into the same situation who has formed other habits, and passed all her days in the enjoyment of abundance.

It is true, Religion can inspire the heart with resignation and contentment in the most trying circumstances; but, independently of this benign influence, she is not, as a candidate for domestic happiness, placed on a level with the

lowest order of her sex: because the individuals that compose this class have suffered no degradation of rank, no reverses of fortune; their expectations were always limited, and have perhaps never extended beyond the sphere in which they have been accustomed to move. They are in no danger of being rendered miserable by contrasting past enjoyments with the present. Better days they have never known; and should not the desire of ameliorating their condition awaken sensibility and regret, their minds continue in unison with their circumstances. Each puts a hand to the oar in labouring for the bread that perisheth: and if diligence procure them food, and the other necessities to which they have been inured, they are contented to labour, and are able to encounter difficulties, and to struggle under burdens that a woman familiar with indulgence would not, however willing, have strength to support, and the bare contemplation of which might sink her into perpetual dejection.

It is in vain to alledge, in excuse for bringing a woman from the table of plenty to share

the mere necessities of life, That, as Dr. Paley expresses it, 'a more simple diet, ruder habitations, or coarser apparel, would be sufficient for the purposes of life and health, or even of physical ease and pleasure. For it is not enough that men's natural wants be supplied, that a provision adequate to the real exigencies of human life be attainable: habitual superfluities become actual wants; opinion and fashion convert articles of ornament and luxury into necessities of life: and it must not be expected from men in general, at least in the present relaxed state of morals and discipline, that they will degrade their condition, reduce their mode of living, deprive themselves of the accommodations to which they have been accustomed, or even of those ornaments or appearance of rank and station which they have been taught to regard as belonging to their birth, or class, or profession, or place in society. The same consideration, namely, a view to their accustomed mode of life, which is so apparent in the superior orders of the people, has no less influence upon those ranks which compose the

mass of the community. For instance, when the common people of a country are accustomed to eat a large proportion of animal food, to drink wine, spirits, or beer, to wear shoes and stockings, to dwell in stone houses, they will not be content to live in clay cottages, upon roots and milk, with no other clothing than skins, or what is necessary to defend the trunk of the body from the effects of cold ; although these last may be all that the sustenance of life and health require, or that even contribute much to animal comfort and enjoyment.'

This reasoning is undoubtedly warranted by facts that come under daily observation : if however it should be questionable whether the principle on which it proceeds can be fairly vindicated, there are certainly some cases in which the arguments for it are abundantly more plausible than in others. A man, for instance, possessed of two thousand pounds a year, might think it hard to be compelled to live on eighteen hundred ; but the hardship would be much greater upon him who must suffer a propor-

tional deduction, and have the same individuals to maintain with an income of two hundred.

With reference however to yourself, Philetus, there would be no just occasion for alarm were you to marry without dowry the woman of your choice. You possess enough to retain the station you have long occupied; and should you be afterwards compelled to fall back into the next rank, you would derive fresh courage from the recollection of having gained a confederate to assist in the conflict.

But can he be denominated poor, who shall call her his own whom the Great God has vouchsafed to enrich with grace, and made a denizen of heaven? Respecting pecuniary matters he may indeed be literally poor; he will nevertheless see that he possesses a jewel of no small value, when it is remembered that she is the price of blood! the object of a Saviour's love, and dear to him as the apple of his eye! She is redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, nor are these the badges now

given to demonstrate her worth: the pearl of great price that she possesses, is concealed from the world; and the inheritance of which she is an heir, is situated in a far and better country. As to worth, it is infinitely preferable to those earthly possessions which are so alluring to the eye of sense: it is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.

There are indeed some professed disciples of Christ who can dispense with the want of a title to this inheritance, provided they can meet with a woman who has one already in possession. In the ardour of pursuit after things that are seen and temporal, those that are unseen and eternal are either disregarded or forgotten. Should the real christian, however, so far lose sight of his interest and his duty as to act the same part, he may rest assured that, if there be a sincere attachment to the person of his wife, he will soon find his tranquillity disturbed. It is true he may possess the wealth he was anxious to secure, but the moments will occur in which it will be remembered that, while the object

of his affectionate regard is eminently distinguished by the bounties of providence, she has no well grounded prospect of felicity when the life shall end to which they are adapted. To him that shall contemplate the nature and extent of moral evil, the worth of the soul, and the unutterable misery or happiness that awaits it in another world, this is a consideration of the last importance.

But were the same man united to a truly pious woman, and so situated as not to be able by the most unwearied exertions to procure the things necessary to comfortable subsistence, he would feel no small consolation in reflecting that the period would arrive when the woman of his choice, released from perplexity and sorrow, would enter into rest, and eternally participate in another world the happiness which is in vain hoped for in the present.

The heart of the wicked, we are told, is of little worth: nor could the accumulated riches of the world add to its value. ‘Nothing, in-

deed, makes us rich as men, but wisdom and virtue; nor as christians, but piety and holiness: and in these, which are the only true and substantial riches, the poorest christian may vie stakes with all the world. Drop into the scale millions of gold, boundless revenues, ample territories, crowns and sceptres, and a poor contemptible christian lays his one God against all these, and beggars them'—they are lighter than the dust on the balance!

Is it not enough, Philetus, that you both have received the earnest and are heirs of the same inheritance, though not yet actually in possession? The time of investiture cannot be long delayed, or at least not so protracted as to exhaust patience and extinguish hope. In the country to which you are bound, the title and the patrimony are infallibly secured from forfeiture or decay; and during the journey you are alike the objects of Divine care, and shall finally partake of the same happiness. This, remember, is not your rest, because it is polluted. You are strangers and pilgrims de-

sirous of a better country, and travelling to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Pass, therefore, the time of your sojourning here in fear. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; but, having food and raiment, learn therewith to be content.

Whenever we find ourselves covetous of wealth, and anxious for the superfluities it may procure, we forget the character we sustain, and are perhaps soliciting an encumbrance that may retard our progress. While in this vale of trial and of sorrow, we should act like the traveller who is not much concerned about the accommodations of an inn: who considers it merely as a stage where nature may forget the langour of fatigue; where she may enjoy the momentary quiet of repose, and then rise invigorated to prosecute the journey that remains. He remembers that nothing can solace the weariness of travel so much as the pleasure of discourse; he is therefore more desirous of knowing the company he must keep, than scrupulously nice respecting the delicacies provided

for refreshment by the way.—But concerning this, Philetus, you can have no anxiety; you will have the company of one who chooseth the same path, who delighteth in the same pleasures, and who trusteth in the same God.

Suppose, however, that this amiable companion of your life could add to your present income, which, if not ample, is sufficient for all that frugality can ask, would that increase your happiness? would it sweeten one of the many bitters you must taste, or purchase one moment's interval from pain? No; happiness consisteth not in the abundance that a man possesseth. A mind 'formed upon the principles of the gospel, may look down with contempt upon the lustre of a throne, and yet know the value, and feel a sense of gratitude in the possession of a crumb.'

'Every man is rich or poor, according to the proportion between his desires and enjoyments; any enlargement of wishes is therefore equally destructive to happiness with the diminution of possession, and he that teaches

another to long for what he never shall obtain, is no less an enemy to his quiet, than if he had robbed him of part of his patrimony.

The most exalted situation in life is exposed, yea, probably most exposed to the fascinating allurements of temptation; 'and whosoever shall look heedfully upon those who are eminent for their riches, will not think their condition such as that he should hazard his quiet, and much less his virtue, to obtain it. For all that great wealth generally gives above a moderate fortune, is more room for the freaks of caprice, and more privilege for ignorance and vice, a quicker succession of flatteries, and a larger circle of voluptuousness.'

Could we but take a comprehensive view of the various conditions of human life, and realize the hopes and the fears, the pains and the pleasures, assigned to each; we should perhaps soon be convinced that there is, on the whole, a more equal distribution of misery and of happiness than is generally imagined; or, at least, that neither the one nor the other is exclusively

allotted to the rich or to the poor; but that both have their intervals of sorrow and of joy; and that neither poverty nor wealth exempts them from feeling the common calamities of life, nor confers that happiness we so eagerly pursue, but which we must not experience in a world where every enjoyment is subject to interruption; where the sweets of health are imbittered with disease, and the vigor of youth with the languor of decay.

*' Enough has heaven indulg'd of joy below,
To tempt our terraces in this lov'd retreat;
Enough has heaven ordain'd of useful woe,
To make us languish for a happier seat.'*

But why, Philetus, are we so anxious about 'a world which is, as one remarks, so slippery, and so full of disappointments, that neither they who have it, are secure of keeping it, nor they who have it not, of getting it?' Is it that we may feed the poor, or clothe the naked, and become more extensively useful to the cause and interests of religion? This, indeed, is generally the specious pretext by which avarice imperceptibly gains and keeps possession of the heart. But it is a great mistake to ima-

gine that, to be serviceable to others, a man must himself of necessity be rich: for there is no situation so humble, there are no circumstances so narrow, as to preclude usefulness: and the fallacy of such reasoning will appear evident to him who shall remember, that the manifestation of patience and submission to the will of God under the pressure of poverty and affliction exhibits more of the Divine power, redounds more to the Divine glory, and would, if properly regarded, be more conducive to the real happiness of others, than the mere bestowment of millions.

He who shall evince by his temper and his conduct that, in the midst of penury and distress, he is contented and thankful, cannot be said to live in vain. His example must enforce conviction on the minds of those who behold his resignation and his gratitude, that the happiness of life consisteth not in the possession of abundance; that the present world, which all are endeavouring to grasp, can supply, at most, but the cravings of sensual appetite; and that he who shall be enabled to bring his mind to

his condition, will have no occasion to solicit adventitious aid, either to silence the murmurs of discontent, or to perpetuate the joys of tranquillity.

But even in the distribution of pecuniary matters, the poor must not be viewed as contributing nothing to relieve the sufferings of indigence. If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not: and on this principle, a farthing gratuitously bestowed may vie with the splendour of thousands—Lazarus in his rags might have been a successful competitor with Dives in purple.

Persons who are comparatively poor, or at least who are far removed from affluence, are perhaps more compassionate, more liberal, and on the whole, really contribute more for benevolent purposes than those denominated rich. It seldom happens that charity keeps pace with the power of bestowing it. If however the truth of this remark be questionable, there can be no risk in asserting that, circumstances con-

sidered, they give abundantly more in proportion. This declaration, I know, will not be hastily credited by those who view only the surface of things; who measure the benevolence of the giver by the bulk of the gift; but I think it will meet the approbation of Him that said, when beholding those who freely offered at the temple, 'Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.'

The man, Philetus, who imagines that the possession of wealth will complete his happiness is undoubtedly mistaken. There is no agreement between the means and the end. The mind is too spiritual in its nature to be satisfied with earthly materials, such as silver and gold, houses and land: but godliness with contentment is great gain; and it is the want of this contentment that makes us restless and dissatisfied with the allotment of heaven.

There are few temptations in the present life to which we are more liable, and against which we ought more constantly to watch and to pray, than a spirit of discontent. This murmuring and rebellious temper, so far as it prevails, is highly dishonourable and destructive of happiness. In a real christian, however, it cannot be habitual: it may frequently interrupt his quiet; it may struggle hard for the mastery; yea, in some unguarded hour, he may suffer temporary defeat; and, like the Psalmist, become envious at the prosperity of the wicked; but he will not be permitted to continue long in this deplorable condition. It is incompatible not only with his own peace, but with his professed acquiescence in the dispensations of providence. The perturbation of his mind will convict him of remissness and duplicity; will evince the need of submission and repentance; and bring to remembrance those delightful seasons in which he could unfeignedly say, I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. In the most trying circumstances, bread shall be given

and water shall be sure; and if I am not favoured with the elegancies or the comforts of life, the God whom I serve will, I trust, help me to bring my mind to my condition, 'which, while on earth, is, as Spurstowe expresses it, as well my duty as my happiness; and to rest assured that in heaven he will bring my estate to my mind; which is, that I may enjoy him in whose presence there is fulness of joy and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.'

The christian who shall be enabled thus to speak, and thus to act, will not find misery and wretchedness inseparably connected with a scanty portion of the bounties of providence; nor see reason to conclude that happiness is stationary in the mansions of opulence and splendour.

It is not our real wants, Philetus, but those that are imaginary, we long to gratify. It is not the necessities, but the superfluities of life that we covet. An ambitious desire of imitating the grandeur of the great, is the principle

by which we are often imperceptibly actuated, and is perhaps generally the cause of discontentment with the condition in which providence has placed us.

Persons, who have but little of the good things pertaining to the present life, are apt to imagine that the man who is surrounded with affluence and splendour, must be exempt from perplexity and sorrow; that he can have no cause for disquiet; that he must be lulled in perpetual security and ease: and that, were they in the same situation, nothing would be wanting to the completion of happiness.

Were, indeed, the things that wealth may procure, as much adapted to tranquillize and satisfy the mind, as they are to feed and to decorate the body, the conclusion would be rational. But for this purpose they are totally inadequate.

* Where pain, sickness, and absolute want are out of the question, no external change of circumstances can make a man more lastingly

happy than he was before. It is to an ignorance of this truth, that the universal dissatisfaction of mankind is principally to be ascribed. Care is the lot of life ; and he that aspires to greatness in hopes to get rid of it, is like one who throws himself into a furnace to avoid the shivering of an ague.'

Could the individuals who thus speculate on the tendency of riches, but realize the pre-eminence for which they pant : they would find, with others of the same rank, that their stores of felicity would be soon exhausted ; and, like them, would be found in quest of new sources of pleasure, and perhaps as easily persuaded to believe that, though hitherto disappointed, there were still sublunary objects in which permanent happiness might certainly be found.

The love of variety in the human heart is incessant : and to the indulgence of this passion, many persons owe the principal part, if not the whole of their happiness. They are

imperceptibly hurried from thing to thing : from one pursuit to another, and are frequently perplexed with the solicitations of different objects at the same time, and often bewildered in determining which to embrace. The felicity which the heart is anxious to secure, is never in fruition, but in hope ; and it is owing to this insatiable propensity that we neglect, or at least do not duly appreciate that which might be actually enjoyed in the things we have already in possession.

‘ Look not up with envy to those above thee, says a sensible writer. Sounding titles, stately buildings, fine gardens, gilded chariots, rich equipages, what are they ? They dazzle every one but the possessor : to him that is accustomed to them they are cheap and regardless things : they supply him not with brighter images, or more sublime satisfactions than the plain man may have, whose small estate may just enable him to support the charge of a simple uncumbered life. He enters heedless into his rooms of state as you or I do under our poor

sheds. The noble paintings and costly furniture are lost on him ; he sees them not.'

When a solitary individual has passed me, sitting apparently at ease in his carriage, and I have been led to contemplate the various conditions of life, and the different sources from which men are expecting happiness, I have sometimes beheld him with a mixture of pity and benevolence. I have imagined it possible that, in consequence of being inured to ease and to affluence, he might feel little or no gratitude for the vehicle that facilitated his progress; that, however distinguished by opulence, he might nevertheless see nothing in his situation to communicate happiness which others around him in humbler circumstances did not equally enjoy : and that, while some were envying his felicity, he might himself perhaps be regretting the want of that content and cheerfulness which he saw impressed on the countenances of those whom he left behind.

'That splendour and elegance are not desirable, I am not so abstracted from life as to

inculcate; but if we enquire closely into the reason for which they are esteemed, we shall find them valued principally as evidences of wealth. Nothing, therefore, can shew greater depravity of understanding, than to delight in the show when the reality is wanting; or voluntarily to become poor, that strangers may for a time imagine us to be rich. To prize every thing according to its real use, ought to be the aim of a rational being. There are few things which can much conduce to happiness, and, therefore, few things to be ardently desired. He that looks upon the business and bustle of the world, with the philosophy with which Socrates surveyed the fair at Athens, will turn away at last with his exclamation, "How many things are here which I do not want!"

It was said by him who exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom, He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase. 'It almost always happens, that the man who grows rich changes his notions of

poverty, states his wants by some new measures, and from flying the enemy that pursued him, bends his endeavours to overtake those whom he sees before him. The power of gratifying his appetites increases their demands; a thousand wishes crowd in upon him, importunate to be satisfied; and vanity and ambition open prospects of desire, which still grow wider, as they are more contemplated.

‘Thus in time want is enlarged without bounds; eagerness for increase of possessions deluges the soul; and we sink into the gulfs of insatiability, only because we do not sufficiently consider, that all real need is very soon supplied, and all real danger of its invasion easily precluded; that the claims of vanity, being without limits, must be denied at last; and that the pain of repressing them is less pungent before they have been long accustomed to compliance.’

The truth of these excellent remarks will be readily allowed on all hands: and yet, how anxious are the generality of men to add house

to house, and field to field; to amass riches which they never can enjoy—riches that perish in the using, that are of no further benefit, and intended for no other purpose than to purchase some temporary relief, some seasonable supply for those wants of human nature which are sure to attend us through every stage and situation of life.

It is true that to wealth we are indebted for many of the comforts, and for almost all the superfluities of life; and hence it is that we sometimes think, nay, most commonly think, that happiness is annexed to the possession of it. Men therefore toil and labour for abundance, and when abundance is obtained, they perhaps find as many wants, as many cares, and as many sorrows, as when poverty was their only burden, when industry procured the necessities of life, or when mediocrity of circumstances placed them beyond the reach of want.

‘ He who has seen only the superficies of life believes every thing to be what it appears,

and rarely suspects that external splendour conceals any latent sorrow or vexation. He never imagines that there may be greatness without safety, affluence without content, jollity without friendship, and solitude without peace.'

The truth is, no terrestrial good can yield that substantial happiness which is suited to the nature and desires of the human mind; and he who thinks to find it in any thing beneath the sun, is pursuing a phantom that will elude his chase: and if it seem to loiter for his approach, it will only be to convince him of his folly; to shew him a mistake that he never saw, and of which thousands never thought, till their race terminated in that country from whence none ever yet returned to acknowledge their error or to confess their shame.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

‘Content, rejecting toys, minds things to come,
Assur’d to have enough to bring her home:
She bids the worldling not for wealth aspire,
The greatest wealth is to contract desire:
She treasures mercies in a grateful heart,
Content and thankfulness all bliss impart.’

FROM what has been said in the preceding Letter, I flatter myself you will not conclude, Philetus, that I think it necessary a man of affluence should make a point of marrying a woman without money, or that a man in low circumstances should expect to marry a woman with an immense fortune. Sentiments of this nature, if reduced to practice, would be productive of nothing but discord and confusion in society. ‘A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment.’—But I will illustrate what I mean.

Men of different ranks in life move in different spheres: the rich and the noble in one

very different from the tradesman, and the tradesman in one different from the lower classes of mankind. Each treads the circle which providence hath allotted, and ought to rest contented with his station.

A man in business, who extends his views to a woman of the first rank and fortune, does not consult his happiness: their education and mode of life; their manners and their pursuits are in many respects dissimilar; the union would be incongruous: to justify himself, however, he may plead his interest, but he cannot plead propriety.

A man also whose maintenance in life is connected with his diligence and his labour, must perceive at once that this is the path which unerring wisdom hath assigned him. If he be dissatisfied with his situation, and aspire after those things that he must be conscious are withheld, he is unmindful of his duty, and must expect to meet with vexation and disappointment. If it be the will of heaven to raise

him to affluence, no obstacle can hinder his advancement: rough places will be made plain, and crooked things straight; and if this affluence is to be communicated by matrimonial alliance, providence will direct to the object, and also to the means by which it is to be obtained. In such a case, hesitancy is not a duty: he ought to persevere till he has gotten full possession of the woman, and, of course, her fortune.

There is, Philetus, a material difference between a man's marrying a woman of fortune, to whom he is directed by the hand of providence, and his making money the object of his inquiries, and the criterion by which he estimates her worth. Such a man emphatically deserves the name of fortune-hunter—a wretch as detestable in society, as destructive of domestic happiness! And if, when marriages are consummated on such plans, there be afterwards between the parties the least appearance of regard, and the common forms of decorum, it is more than can reasonably be

expected, and infinitely more than such mercenaries deserve.

When the love of gain becomes the ruling passion in an individual, and for this purpose objects are forsaken or pursued as the prospect of securing it is doubtful or flattering, a more odious character cannot be readily conceived. In such a breast, the generous feelings are extinct. The heart is a stranger to benevolence: and if this venal passion prompt its agent to indulgence in matrimonial alliance, it becomes more criminal, because the evil will be more extended. The most lovely object may unsuspectingly fall a prey to the rapacity of avarice. If, however, this calamity do not occur, and the sordid wretch should be united to some kindred spirit in human shape, the welfare of society will certainly be endangered, and the junction, of course, equally, if not more pregnant with disaster.

Hence the indifference, the coldness and neglect so frequent in the marriage life. Hence the

intrigues and adulteries so common among the great, whose example and influence are diffusing themselves, and contaminating the morals of all ranks and orders of men.

‘The condition of human life will not permit us to say, that no one can conscientiously marry who does not prefer the person at the altar to all other men or women in the world: but we can have no difficulty in pronouncing (whether we respect the end of the institution, or the plain terms in which the contract is conceived) that whoever is conscious, at the time of his marriage, of such a dislike to the woman he is about to marry, or of such subsisting attachment to some other woman, that he cannot reasonably, nor does in fact, expect ever to entertain an affection for his future wife, is guilty, when he pronounces the marriage vow, of a direct and deliberate prevarication.—This charge must be imputed to all who, from mercenary motives, marry the objects of their aversion and disgust; and likewise to those who desert, from any motive

whatever, the object of their affection, and without being able to subdue that affection, marry another.'

'When,' says a celebrated writer, 'I see the avaricious and crafty taking companions to their tables, and their beds, without inquiry, but after farms and money; or the giddy and thoughtless uniting themselves for life to those whom they have only seen by the light of tapers at a ball; when parents make articles for their children, without inquiring after their consent; when some marry for heirs to disappoint their brothers, and others throw themselves into the arms of those whom they do not love, because they have found themselves rejected where they were more solicitous to please; when some marry because their servants cheat them, some because they squander their own money, some because their houses are pestered with company, some because they will live like other people, and some only because they are sick of themselves; I am not so much inclined to wonder that marriage is sometimes happy, as that it appears so little loaded with calamity;

and cannot but conclude that society has something in itself eminently agreeable to human nature, when I find its pleasures so great that even the ill choice of a companion can hardly overbalance them.'

These remarks, it is presumed, are not applicable to the disciples of Christ, but to those who are strangers to religion. The christian, however, who shall suffer mercenary considerations to predominate in the choice of a companion, may be less capricious but he is not more provident. By such a conduct, he is virtually opening a door for the entrance of calamity; and should he not be so completely miserable, nor addicted to the vices common to men whose chief aim is the gratification of sensual appetite, it is not owing to the dictates of precaution, but to the interposition of another hand. A sincere, mutual, and disinterested regard is the only basis of conjugal felicity; and where this is wanting, no human ties can ensure that tenderness and affection which marriage was intended to sanction. If, therefore, Philetus, you value your own hap-

piness, embrace the woman who first excited your esteem, who appears in every respect worthy of your love, and for whom you seem in providence to be designed.

I have now in my possession a letter that was written by a friend when nearly in your circumstances. I will transcribe part of it for your perusal and reflection.

‘ The recollection that we are one in heart and in sentiment, affords me the most sincere pleasure. This happy coincidence, like a three-fold cord, cannot be easily broken ; and if it do not wholly interdict calamity, it will enable us to bear it with fortitude and resignation unknown to those who are perpetually harassed with jarring opinions and opposition of conduct.

‘ That the providence of God is ever active not only in the great, but in the minutest occurrences of life, I have long thought ; and it is a full conviction of this truth that has led me

to implore direction to a woman with whom I could cordially unite ; and as an answer to my prayers, I receive with the warmest gratitude, and the most tender affection, my Alethea. I view thee as his choicest earthly gift—and to thee I unbosom the feelings of a heart that longs to make thy life more happy, if possible, than my own.

‘ Come, then, let us mutually unite in thankfulness to the father of our mercies. “ Every comfort has a voice, and cries in the ear of reason ; O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness.” Has he united our hearts by the indissoluble bonds of affection and grace ; has he brought us thus far, and will he not carry us through the remainder of our journey ? Yes, my Alethea, most assuredly he will. Let us therefore honour the precious promises graciously given for encouragement and support ; let us cast all our cares upon him who careth for us, and leave his superintending providence to manage all things for us agreeably to the counsel of his own will. This is certainly our

duty and our privilege. "They that know thy name, says the Psalmist, will trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."

' We have not, it is true, abundance of temporal blessings, nor is our path likely to be so smooth and pleasing as the love of ease and of affluence might desire; but surely the consideration that all things are dispensed according to the good pleasure of our heavenly Father, must silence every murmur, and make us thankful for what may be denominated the smallest favour. To distrust his providential goodness would be highly criminal; for He that hath prepared for us an inheritance in heaven; who hath redeemed us both from perdition; who feeds the raven and the sparrow, and giveth to all their meat in due season, will certainly provide whatever may be needful for support while travelling to possess it. Our allowance on the way may indeed possibly be narrow; yet still, bread shall be given, and water shall be sure: and should even this comparatively small allotment of

heaven be withheld, we shall feel pleasure in reflecting that our journey will only be the shorter, and our patrimony sooner in possession.

‘ When we contemplate the vicissitudes of life, and the transitory nature of all earthly comforts; how encouraging to reflect that this is not our rest—that it is said, “ They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing—blessed is the man that trusteth in him :”—and if this be true, surely we ought never to repine; knowing that either more or less than we have already in possession or in prospect, would not comport with the promise.

‘ Every moment that shortens the duration of a christian’s life is important. It finds him so situated, and leaves him so circumstanced, as, on the whole, heaven seems to be fitted for him: all things work together for his good; and that man is truly blessed who, under a conviction of this fact, receives his daily bread with thankfulness—He experiences a pleasure that exceeds description. It is gratitude that

gives a relish to every repast; that makes the coarsest morsel delicious to the taste; and it is the want of this that makes affluence a burden instead of a blessing to the rich.

‘ That earthly comforts are not always distributed with equal liberality between the righteous and the wicked, is not because obstructions hinder the bestowment. Surely He that enricheth the mines of Golconda and Peru, can dispose of the shining treasure when, and to whom he pleases. With God all things are possible. He is the rightful proprietor of all things. The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; every beast of the forest, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. No good thing is withheld from them that walk uprightly; and the christian should perpetually live under a conviction that, if poverty be his portion, prosperity would not accelerate his happiness. A cordial belief of this truth would calm the turbulence of worldly passions; would repress the love of ease and of affluence; and show the folly of losing the enjoyment of present mercies, by incessantly panting for the felicity that wealth

and eminence of station are supposed to communicate.

‘ Some persons, who are not chargeable with gross sins, seem not to be aware that the love of the world is incompatible with religion, and as much the subject of scripture reprehension as many of the crimes which very justly excite their abhorrence. How admirable is the expository language of our blessed Lord when referring to this subject in his sermon on the mount ! The passage to which I allude is eminently beautiful, and has been happily paraphrased by the celebrated author of the SEASONS—I will transcribe his lines for your perusal and reflection.

When my breast labours with oppressive care,
And o'er my cheek descends the falling tear,
While all my warring passions are at strife,
Oh, let me listen to the words of life !
Raptures deep-felt his doctrine did impart,
And thus he rais'd from earth the drooping heart.
Think not, when all your scanty stores afford,
Is spread at once upon the sparing board ;
Think not, when worn the homely robe appears,
While on the roof the howling tempest bears ;
What further shall this feeble life sustain,
And what shall clothe these shiv'ring limbs again.

Say, does not life its nourishment exceed?

And the fair body its investing weed?

Behold! and look away your low despair—

See the light tenants of the barren air:

To them, nor stores, nor granaries belong;

Nought but the woodland and the pleasing song;

Yet, your kind heavenly Father bends his eye

On the least wing that flits along the sky.

To him they sing, when spring renews the plain;

To him they cry, in winter's pinching reign;

Nor is their music, nor their plaint in vain:

He hears the gay, and the distressful call,

And with unsparing bounty fills them all.

Observe the rising lily's snowy grace;

Observe the various vegetable race;

They neither toil, nor spin, but careless grow;

Yet see how warm they blush! how bright they glow!

What regal vestments can with them compare!

What king so shining! or what queen so fair!

If, ceaseless thus the fowls of heaven he feeds,

If o'er the fields such lucid robes he spreads;

Will he not care for you, ye faithless, say!

Is he unwise? or, are ye less than they?

' Godliness is said to have promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; and on these encouraging words I stedfastly rely. What then shall separate our love? Shall a thirst for riches and the luxuries of life be permitted to counteract the dictates of unbiassed affection? No; that be far from us! If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned. For this there is no equivalent. Better is little with the

fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith; and it rarely happens that abundance is possessed without trouble. Yea, a dinner of herbs, where love is, cannot be ungratefully received. This is the Guest that gives pleasure to every repast; that communicates gladness to every heart; whose tarriance should be ardently solicited, and who, if possible, should never be suffered to be absent from the table.

‘ If such then be the pleasures resulting from the ties of natural affection, how must these pleasures be heightened and refined where the love of God dwells richly in the heart? Why, my Alethea, this will make poverty smile amidst adversity, and make the beggar as happy in the possession of his scrip, as the monarch in his crown! The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep: and if the labourer toil hard for the meat that perisheth, he has in the midst of every want, if a follower of Christ, bread to eat which the world knows nothing of, and in exchange for which, he would reject the most sumptuous

fare, or the splendour of a throne. It is not said, happy are they that possess abundance; but happy is he that trusteth in the Lord, in whom are hid those durable riches and righteousness, the merchandise of which is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold—If wealth could make either of us happy, we might, in different directions, both rush to enjoyment without hinderance. But alas! this is an object unworthy of pursuit, what we both disclaim, and above the influence of which, I trust, we shall ever live.

‘The things of the world,’ says an excellent prelate, ‘are suited to the necessities of the body; but he is a beast, or worse than a beast, who reckons himself provided for when only these are supplied.’ The wants of the soul, which is spiritual, are surely as important as those of the tenement it inhabits; and he must be a ‘fool indeed that measures the soul’s goods by the barn or the bushel.’

I have only to add, Philetus, that Alethea and my friend were married, and I believe at

this hour enjoy the fruits attendant on their faith. Providence smiles upon all their endeavours ; and if not indulged with the elegancies of life, they happily participate of all its comforts, without being either exposed to want, or to the temptations that surround the tables of the great. That you may follow their example, and share the same goodness, is the unfeigned wish of

Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

From kind concern about his weal or woe
Let each domestic duty seem to flow.
The household sceptre if he bid you bear,
Make it your pride his servant to appear :
Endearing thus the common acts of life,
The mistress still shall charm him in the wife,
And wrinkled age shall unobserv'd come on
Before his eye perceives one beauty gone ;
E'en o'er your cold, your ever sacred urn,
His constant flame shall unextinguish'd burn.

LYTTLETON.

THROUGH the kindness of Providence, you are at length united to a man, Eloisa, whom I am persuaded you affectionately love, and who I think will make it the business of his life to promote your felicity.

In return, much is wanted on your part. His love, which is in every respect disinterested, (except indeed the interest he feels in possessing the object of his heart) deserves the warmest reception and every possible encouragement. If that be once damped, your happiness will

gradually decline, and either leave you completely miserable, or lost to all the tender feelings of the human heart. To prevent any diminution of his attachment should therefore be your constant study, and your happiest employ. —A task not grievous, Eloisa, but delightful, when the wheels of duty are actuated by the impulse of love. Under that of love indeed may be comprised every other duty: without it none are performed aright: when under its animating influence, we act with pleasure and celerity: but if this be wanting, the feet move slowly in the paths of obedience, and the best services, if not neglected, are indifferently performed.

For the propriety of my remarks, and the necessity of unremitted attention to his and your own happiness, I appeal to yourself. Considerations of this nature, though of the last importance, are too often but little regarded by those who enter into the marriage state. It frequently happens that both parties think all is done, and their happiness effectually secured, when the ceremony is performed. But alas!

how delusive is this supposition ! how contrary to the sad experience of thousands, who soon find themselves disappointed and alarmed ; who, perhaps, are unable by any future efforts to repair the loss they have sustained ; and are compelled to pass the rest of their days harassed by the remembrance of negligence for which there was no cause, and of endearments that must be realized no more !

Having therefore obtained the object of your wishes, the next inquiry is how to preserve his love, and to perpetuate his happiness. During the time of your friendly intercourse before marriage, it is but reasonable to suppose that you made use of every lawful expedient to recommend yourself to his esteem, and to make his heart your own—In a word, your greatest pleasure was to please ; and this endeavour must never be relaxed. That assiduity to give delight, which before seemed easy and familiar, is equally necessary to preserve the love of which marriage is the bond. That we should attempt to render ourselves agreeable to those in whose company we are destined to travel

on the journey of life, is, as one expresses it, the dictate of humanity. It is our interest, it is the source of perpetual satisfaction ; it is one of our most important duties as men, and particularly required in the profession of christianity.

The passion of love is first excited by some real or imaginary excellency supposed to be in the object after the enjoyment of which it aspires. Inducements that are merely external, may lose much of their influence when the object is obtained : but the man who values his own happiness, will add to these such qualities as will make a woman ‘ amiable when her bloom is lost.’ When this is the case, the parties, by a more intimate knowledge of each other, discover new charms ; esteem gradually ripens into love : the affections are firmly united, and happiness soon becomes inseparable from an alliance which nothing but the hand of death can dissolve.

It is however to be feared that this purity of intention and chastity of desire, though incum-

bent on all, are peculiar to few; 'for the whole endeavour of both parties, during the time of courtship, is, says Dr. Johnson, frequently, to hinder themselves from being known; to disguise their natural temper, and real desires, in hypocritical imitation, studied compliance, and continued affectation. From the time that their love is avowed, neither sees the other but in a mask, and the cheat is managed often on both sides with so much art, and discovered afterwards with so much abruptness, that each has reason to suspect that some transformation has happened on the wedding night, and that by a strange imposture, as in the case of Jacob, one has been courted, and another married.'

But it may be asked, Do either of the candidates for conjugal felicity expect that, when the ceremony is over, possession will abridge their pleasures? No; a disappointment so repugnant to the expectations they have formed is what neither can desire, and perhaps what they never once suspected. When we minutely examine the conduct of mankind after marriage,

we too frequently discover some abatement of affection, some suspension of regard, and perhaps but little of that tender officiousness which, during the 'assiduities of courtship,' was displayed on the most frivolous occasions. The springs of love seem weakened by possession of the object; and what was once thought most dear and valuable, and for which every thing else would have been cheerfully relinquished, is now but lightly esteemed, and if not wholly forsaken, is treated with neglect.

After the acquisition of a virtuous partner in the conjugal state, it is perhaps more difficult to account for diminution of esteem, than after the attainment of any thing else whatever. There is the same individual that gave existence to desire; an alliance that is endearing and permanent; a mutual attention to duties the most salutary and engaging; and, one would think, every thing that is calculated to promote and to perpetuate felicity. Probably it is natural for us to prize what is farthest from our reach. Distance may increase anxiety, may stamp im-

moderate value on an object, and possession lessen estimation and regard.

Whether this remark will satisfactorily account for that instability inseparable from human nature, I will not venture to affirm. There can however be little hazard in asserting, That ‘the pleasure of expecting enjoyment, is often greater than that of obtaining it, and that the completion of almost every wish is found a disappointment.’ And this will be readily believed, if we reflect that ‘the desires of mankind are much more numerous than their attainments, and the capacity of imagination much larger than actual fruition.’

Every man is born into the world an heir to disappointments that he cannot elude, and from the pain of which he cannot exempt himself either by artifice or care. He feels himself the subject of appetites that he cannot indulge; of desires that he cannot gratify; and of passions that he cannot conquer. The acquisition of the most delightful sublunary good, affords

him but a temporary pleasure that is soon exhausted by fruition: and as his desires after happiness are rather augmented than decreased by miscarriage, other sources of felicity are immediately contemplated with fresh rapture, and no expedient left untried to obtain them. Hence that love of novelty which, in all its forms, is so grateful to the human mind. The eye, as the Preacher remarks, is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing; and as long as this restless passion can be amused with variety, there is little fear of satiety or disgust. New objects are pursued with avidity till familiarized by custom; and as familiarity increases, the power of attraction is generally diminished.

This fickleness of temper and of conduct is connatural to man. There is in every heart, not only a propensity to cleave to new objects, but also a comparative neglect of those on which the eye formerly dwelt with pleasure, and which have undergone no change but what capricious fancy may have wantonly suggested.

‘To this cause we must ascribe it, that love languishes with fruition, and friendship itself is recommended by intervals of absence.’

In this inconstancy of attachment we resemble children, who, if but a feather be exhibited at a distance, seem transported with delight; increase that distance, and you stimulate desire; you make them more importunate, more restless, and raise a passion which nothing can gratify but possession. Indulge, for a moment, those infant solicitants, and they awhile admire with ecstasy the beloved object; but alas! neither the softness of its touch, nor the rich variety of its colours, can long secure the ardour of attention. The fascinating trifle is soon treated with indifference; is thrown aside with disgust; and those charms that were once beheld with rapture, are remembered no more.

Thus, Eloisa, time and possession too frequently lessen our attachment to those objects that were once most valued; to enjoy which no difficulties were thought insurmountable, no

trials too great, and no pain too severe. Such, also, is the tenure by which we hold all terrestrial happiness, and such the instability of all human estimation: and though the ties of conjugal affection are calculated to promote, as well as to secure permanent felicity; yet many, it is to be feared, have just reason to exclaim with Chloe.

‘ Once to prevent my wishes Philo flew ;
But Time, that alters all, has alter’d you.’

It is perhaps not to be expected that a man can ‘ retain through life that respect and assiduity by which he pleases for a day or for a month.’ Care however should be taken that he do not so far relax his vigilance as to induce a belief that his affection is diminished. Few disquietudes occur in domestic life which might not have been prevented: and those so frequently witnessed, generally arise from a want of attention to those mutual endearments which all have it in their power to perform, and which, as they are essential to the preservation of happiness, should never be intentionally omitted.

That both sexes sometimes neglect, and are frequently remiss in performing this important duty, cannot reasonably be doubted. But that men are more culpable than women, is notorious. Few women are insensible of tender treatment; and I believe the number of those is small indeed, who would not recompense it by the most grateful returns. They are naturally frank and affectionate; and, in general, there is nothing but austerity of look and distance of behaviour, that can prevent these amiable qualities from being evidenced by a demeanour at once attractive and endearing.

These encomiastic remarks are not made with a view to court the esteem of the sex to whom praise is said to be always grateful: they are the result of observation and experience: and in corroboration of this opinion, I am happy in having an opportunity of citing the testimony of the justly celebrated Ledyard, 'I have always remarked, says that accurate observer of mankind, that women in all countries are civil and obliging, tender and humane; that they are ever inclined to be gay

and cheerful, timorous and modest; and that they do not hesitate, like man, to perform a generous action. Not haughty, not arrogant, not supercilious; they are full of courtesy, and fond of society; more liable, in general, to err than man; but in general also more virtuous, and performing more good actions than he. To a woman, whether civilized or savage, I never addressed myself, in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. With man it has often been otherwise. In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden, and frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the widespread regions of the wandering Tartar; if hungry, dry, cold, wet, or sick, the women have ever been friendly to me, and uniformly so. And to add to this virtue (so worthy the appellation of benevolence), these actions have been performed in so free and kind a manner, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught; and if hungry, I eat the coarsest morsel with a double relish.

To the remarks which I have made as the

result of my own observation and experience, there are undoubtedly exceptions. It is not to be imagined that every woman in domestic life is deserving of unqualified eulogium, nor that all men are uniformly culpable. But that men are generally less attentive to those kind offices which keep alive affectionate regard, there can be little doubt. There are probably but few men who have not experienced, during the intervals of leisure and reflection, a conviction of this truth. In the hour of absence and of solitude, who has not felt his heart cleaving to the wife of his bosom? Who has not been at some seasons deeply impressed with a sense of her amiable disposition and demeanour—of her unwearied endeavours to promote his happiness; and of its being his indispensable duty to evince by the most unequivocal expressions of attachment and of tenderness, his full approbation of her assiduity and faithfulness?—And lives not the man who has often returned to his habitation fully determined to requite the kindness he has constantly experienced; but who, notwithstanding, has beheld

the woman of his heart, joyful at his approach, without even attempting to execute his purpose? —who has still withheld the rewards of esteem and affection; and from a motive, the cause of which I never could develope, shrunk from the task of duty, and repressed those soft emotions which might have gladdened the breast of her who was always prompt to anticipate desire, and eager to contribute every thing that affection could suggest, or diligence perform, to augment and perpetuate felicity.

There, are, perhaps, of both sexes, those who, in reference to this matter, have spent the whole of the marriage life, agitated with a sense of duty and of remissness; but who, nevertheless, have suffered every trifling occurrence to hinder the discharging this debt of love and of gratitude. But the mind will not always be so easily diverted. The remembrance of this negligence is now frequently so painful, as to disturb the most tranquil hours; but it will be pungent indeed, when the slighted object shall be removed from all terrestrial scenes of inque-

tude and sorrow, and the solitary delinquent have leisure to lament a loss, the value of which he never fully understood, or, at least, of which he always seemed to be insensible.

Let it therefore never be forgotten, that during the whole of life, ' beauty must suffer no diminution by inelegance, but every charm must contribute to keep the heart which it contributed to win ; whatever would have been concealed as a defect from the lover must with greater diligence be concealed from the husband. The most intimate and tender familiarity cannot surely be supposed to exclude decorum ; and there is a delicacy in every mind, which is disgusted at the breach of it, though every mind is not sufficiently attentive to avoid giving an offence which it has often received.' That unwearied solicitude to please, which was once the effect of choice, is now become a duty from which you can never be released.

' Ev'n in the happiest choice, where fav'ring heaven
Has equal love and easy fortune given,
Think not the husband gain'd that all is done ;
The prize of happiness must still be won.'

In this, Eloisa, I am persuaded we agree; nor do I think you either inattentive or wanting in affection: permit me however to apprize you of some errors that are inimical to happiness, and which frequently occur in the marriage life.

By marrying you have committed yourself to the care of one whose province is government and direction: the duty on your part is therefore subjection and obedience. Agreeable to which is the apostolic command, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.'

With this truth coincides experience; for the wife, as the weaker vessel, naturally cleaves to her husband, and expects from him both assistance and advice. And here, it is presumed, you will have no reason to complain. Philetus is a man blessed with too much good sense to request what is unreasonable; and his

love too great to solicit attention to any thing but what conscience demonstrates to be right, and urges as a duty. To be exempted from the abuse of that delegated power committed to the husband, as the head of the wife, for their mutual benefit, is a happiness not always enjoyed. Such a privilege should therefore heighten your esteem; should be a spur to diligence, and should raise a continual desire of adding to your own felicity by increasing his.

‘To render the matrimonial state more harmonious and comfortable, a mutual esteem and tenderness, a mutual deference and forbearance, a communication of advice, and assistance and authority, are absolutely necessary. If either party keep within their proper department; there need be no disputes about power or superiority, and there will be none. They have no opposite, no separate interests, and therefore there can be no just ground for opposition of conduct.’

To promote, as well as to preserve the happiness of your husband, let your conduct be

exemplary, and your carriage easy, affable, and kind. Order and harmony are essential to happiness; and where these are wanting, every enjoyment must be lessened, because its duration is uncertain.

In the marriage life, there are perhaps few sources of calamity more to be dreaded than reserve. If this enemy to social intercourse and mutual tenderness be suffered to enter, it will eat like a canker into the very heart of your comforts, and leave you without even the appearance of felicity. Consider marriage 'as the most solemn league of perpetual friendship, a state from which artifice and concealment are to be banished for ever, and in which every act of dissimulation is a breach of faith.' Let every part of your conduct evidence the most endearing familiarity and candour. If your husband should have just reason to complain of a want of these testimonies of your regard, his happiness, if not destroyed, will be considerably diminished; and whenever this shall happen, he will soon suspect the warmth of your affection, and perhaps your virtue!

Reserve bespeaks a want of esteem and of confidence. It stops the intercourse of love : it damps the risings of desire ; and like the nipping frost, kills the blossom in the bud.

I wish you to avoid another evil repugnant to the ties of marriage, and the duty it enjoins : I mean that of making confidants of others respecting such matters as relate only to yourselves. If this strange propensity to communicate to others, what others are not interested in knowing, be encouraged or indulged, even in things of the smallest consequence, it will soon extend to those of greater moment ; and in some unguarded hour, induce you to discover what prudence would urge you to conceal.

Your husband, it is certain, will not be without his faults ; but is that a reason why they should be exposed ? No ; duty and affection teach another lesson. The mere suspicion of these imperfections being communicated to a third person, will create a jealousy prejudicial to his happiness ; and the woman who shall

attempt to lessen her trials by exposing the frailties of human nature, will find that she has increased the burden she was anxious to remove.

In this case, she is making an appeal where complaints may indeed be heard with sympathetic tenderness, but where they cannot be redressed. She must, after all, return to the seat of disquietude and sorrow : she must again contemplate the scene that shall renew grief and perpetuate dejection : and if she cannot remove at once the cause of her distress, all palliatives will be useless. The commiseration of others will afford but a momentary suspension of misery ; and she will quickly find that the wound which ceased to pain, was only recruiting its strength to throb with fresh vigour and to awaken keener anguish.

Such a breach of conjugal fidelity is therefore pregnant with mischief. It has a natural tendency to sour the mind, to render the temper irascible, and to produce coldness and neglect. ‘ He that has no one to love or trust

has little to hope.' He wants the radical principle of happiness.

In the marriage life, Confidants are seldom either useful or desirable. It is perhaps neither safe nor prudent to intrust the dearest friend with what we wish concealed from a husband or a wife. Access to the secret repository of the heart is a privilege peculiar to both, and from which the nearest relative should stand excluded: nor can the breach of it be dispensed with by either, without sacrificing a prerogative of inestimable value in domestic life. The love and friendship of that man cannot be much esteemed, 'who spreads his arms to human kind, and makes every man, without distinction, a denizen of his bosom.' But, if with entire confidence we can unbosom the feelings of the heart, what distress may not be alleviated, what difficulty not lessened, or what enjoyment not heightened by the kind interposition, the seasonable advice, and the tender sympathy of one who delights to share both our sorrows and our joys?

' For souls that carry on a bleas'd exchange
Of joys they meet with in their heav'nly range,
And with a fearless confidence make known
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,
Daily derive increasing light and force
From such communion in their pleasant course,
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,
Meet their opposers with united strength,
And, one in heart, in int'rest, and design,
Gird up each other to the race divine.'

The woman therefore who abuses such a privilege is imprudent and unkind; she exposes her own weakness, gives just occasion of offence, and wounds the honour of her husband by stabbing him in the tenderest part. What, says he, has the wife of my bosom dealt thus treacherously with me! Had it been an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it—But it was thou, mine equal, with whom I took sweet counsel—Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, that has thus requited me.

But, my amiable friend, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak. I believe you will studiously avoid even the appearance of what might be thought likely to displease, and demonstrate by every possible

means both the warmth and the sincerity of your love.

By a little attention to the temper and disposition of your husband, you will easily discern what affects his happiness; and let it never be forgotten, that 'life consists not of a series of illustrious actions or elegant enjoyments; the greater part of our time passes in compliance with necessities, in the performance of daily duties, in the removal of small inconveniences, in the procurement of petty pleasures; and we are well or ill at ease, as the stream of life glides on smoothly, or is ruffled by small obstacles and frequent interruption.'

Disputes about trivial matters I would wish you always to decline. From things the most unimportant in themselves, frequently, yea, most commonly, arise altercations that are sometimes 'continued by the desire of conquest, till vanity kindles into rage, and opposition rankles into enmity;' when, by compliance on the part of either, both might have been easily prevented. Better is a dry morsel, says Solomon,

and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife. In all such cases, unreserved concession, if nothing but concession can assuage the fury of debate, will be more honourable than obstinate resistance. For though you might both 'hasten to reconciliation, as soon as the tumult had subsided, yet two minds will seldom be found together, which can at once subdue their discontent, or immediately enjoy the sweets of peace, without remembering the wounds of the conflict.'

' Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day!
She who ne'er answers till a husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.'

Instead, therefore, of contending for mastery where victory would be useless, evince that you glory in condescension rather than in conquest. Such a conduct will cherish your husband's esteem, and be productive of the happiest effects. Time and possession, which too frequently lessen the sense of our enjoyments, will demonstrate that, in such a wife, he possesses all the means of endearment. He will see that,

to your unremitted affection and attention, he stands indebted for the fruition of domestic quiet; as well as for consolations which, in the hour of distress, sympathetic tenderness will be anxious to impart; and if those consolations cannot remove the cause of inquietude, they will alleviate the pain it may produce, and support the mind amidst a thousand cares and perplexities inseparably connected with the present state.

Endeavour, Eloisa, to make your husband's habitation an earthly paradise. Let him have reason to consider it as 'a sanctuary to shelter from the anxieties and ills of life, and where those pure and innocent pleasures are enjoyed which afford the most genuine happiness, and which are not to be tasted in the bustle of the busy and the dissipation of the gay world.' Aim at perfection in all you do. The best example is certainly the most worthy of imitation: nor are you to be discouraged because that desirable state is unattainable in the present life. A failure on your part will only betray the imperfection of human nature, and

demonstrate the unfeigned love and sincerity of your heart. Miscarriage in this case will prove an incomparable lesson. It will teach you to bear with the infirmities and failings of your husband :—For who can look for perfection in another, who is conscious that he himself never could attain it?

Of the temper of your mind, be particularly watchful. It is possible that on the most trifling occasion its tranquillity may be sometimes disturbed: and, if the first risings of tumult be not instantly suppressed, it will be deprived of that delightful serenity which is essential to the health of existence. He that is slow to anger, says the sacred writer, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. An irritable disposition, if indulged, will provoke dissension, and terminate in expressions inimical to peace. But words are not the only causes of inquietude. An unkind deportment, or looks expressive of resentment, produce the same effects, and should therefore be avoided. Very opposite to such a conduct is a placid and

affable demeanour, the fruit of gentleness and forbearance—virtues that demonstrate the warmth and sincerity of that love which suffereth long, and is kind—is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, but rejoiceth in the unfeigned displays of sincerity and truth.

Other things equally important, and which require particular attention, are the duties of domestic life. It is the characteristic of a good wife, ‘that she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.’ In the management of family concerns she is to guide the house, and in such a manner as to give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. ‘Teach the young women, says an infallible monitor, to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.’ If therefore you would be thought a daughter of faithful and obedient Abraham, follow the example of those ‘holy women, who in old time, trusted in God, and were in subjection to their own husbands—

who adorned themselves, not with the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel ; but with the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.'

In the management of your family, endeavour to provide all things convenient without extravagance ; so that the fruit of your husband's industry may not be improvidently spent. Frugality without meanness is an acquisition in domestic life that is certainly desirable ; and would reflect much greater lustre on the female character than many of the accomplishments in which numbers are ambitious to excel, but which, in a comparative view, are of little or of no importance. But extravagance is not the only source of calamity. The want of oeconomy has involved thousands in misery : and in those houses where either the one or the other is predominant, little is beheld but disorder and confusion. Their families are in general as dissipated and thoughtless as them-

selves. Harmony and decorum, with their inseparable companions, peace and happiness, are guests that find within such walls neither residence nor repose.

‘The domestic oeconomy of a family is, as one remarks, entirely a woman’s province, and furnishes a variety of subjects for the exertion both of good sense and good taste. If she ever come to have the charge of a family, it ought to engage much of her time and attention; nor can she be excused from this by any extent of fortune, though with a narrow one, the ruin that follows the neglect of it, may be more immediate.

Having very briefly mentioned, Eloisa, some things that may perhaps contribute to your own felicity, and that of him to whom you have given your hand and your heart; permit me to remind you of the numberless obligations under which you lie to the great Author of your being. His watchful providence has superintended all your ways. To his unbounded liberality you will ever stand indebted as well

for the comforts you now have, as for those you hope in future to enjoy. Look therefore with gratitude to the Father of your mercies; and while you daily implore the continuance of his favours, entreat that whatever is given may answer the wise ends for which it was bestowed.

Your beloved Philetus, remember, is among the many gifts, and not the least you have received. Need I mention that you are both sojourners, as were all your fathers; pilgrims and strangers who have no continuing city; helps, meet for each other, not in temporal concerns only, but also in those that respect the nobler and better part?—To the highest degree of happiness attainable in the present state you naturally aspire. But the brevity of life, and the many vicissitudes with which it is connected, will soon evince that all its enjoyments are transitory and imperfect. This however cannot be said of those celestial pleasures for which you are candidates: these are immutable and consummate. To think of living perpetually together in the mutual fruition of

such sublime happiness, must administer strong consolation: but on the other hand, how awful, how distressing the thought of an eternal separation!—You, who are now closely united by the most affectionate and tender ties, and who, by a reciprocal exchange of the kindest offices, are so endeared to each other as to feel pain at a separation, which, comparatively speaking, is but momentary; how then will you bear to part—to meet no more—to take a last adieu—an everlasting farewell!—Awful and affecting as these considerations undoubtedly are, this will certainly be the case, if either, after being weighed in the balance, shall be found wanting.

‘Shouldst thou behold thy brother, father, wife,
And all the soft companions of thy life,
Whose blended int’rests levell’d at one aim,
Whose mix’d desires sent up one common flame,
Divided far, thy wretched self alone
Cast on the left of all whom thou hast known,
How would it wound! what millions wouldst thou give
For one more trial, one day more to live?
Flung back in time, an hour, a moment’s space,
To grasp with eagerness the means of grace,
Contend for mercy with a pious rage,
And in that moment to redeem an age:
Drive back the tide, suspend a storm in air,
Arrest the sun, but still of this despair.’

Let me therefore intreat you to be anxious as well for the immortal, as the temporal welfare of your husband. The cares of this life are not the only things that demand attention. Ye dwell together here as heirs of the grace of life; and with equal, yea, with much greater solicitude, should watch over each other's souls, should promote each other's spiritual interests, and studiously avoid every thing by which the prayers of either might be hindered.

We are never so circumstanced in the present world, as to need neither information nor advice. No man is wise at all times: or, in other words, no man always acts consistently with wisdom: and if, in reference to the present or the future state, seasons should occur in which this remark may be applicable to the dear partner of your life, unbosom your mind to him with tenderness and with freedom; show him the ground of your suspicion, explain the motive that induced you to expostulate; and should he be convinced that he was wrong, your kind interposition will excite his

admiration and his gratitude. Should he however be able to demonstrate that his principles and his practice were right, you will have nothing to fear; for your watchfulness of his conduct and of his sentiments will give him pleasure; will evidence the sincerity and continuance of your love; and while he is pointing out the cause of your mistake, afford him an opportunity of demonstrating that his own affection is by this incident augmented rather than diminished.

In this line of duty, and by such a mutual regard to each other's welfare, you will taste a pleasure which no language can describe. But if, on the other hand, those endearments should either be neglected or forgotten; should you not embrace every opportunity of manifesting a warm attachment to his person and his interests; the moment is coming when you will remember and lament your remissness; but lament too late to requite the love that was ever anxious to communicate delight; ever impatient to compensate the kindness it received,

and which deserved the most affectionate returns.

When a husband 'is carried to the grave, we at once find excuses for every weakness, and palliations of every fault; we recollect a thousand endearments, which before glided off our minds without impression, a thousand favours unrepaid, a thousand duties unperformed, and wish, vainly wish, for his return; not so much that we may receive, as that we may bestow happiness, and recompense that kindness which before we never understood. Our crime seems now irretrievable, it is indelibly recorded, and the stamp of fate is fixed upon it. We consider, with the most afflictive anguish, the pain which we have given, and now cannot alleviate, and the losses which we have caused, and now cannot repair.—Let us therefore make haste to do what we shall certainly at last wish to have done; let us return the caresses of our friends, and endeavour by mutual endearments to heighten that tenderness which is the balm of life. Let us be quick to repent of injuries while

repentance may not be a barren anguish, and let us open our eyes to every rival excellence, and pay early and willingly those honours which justice will compel us to pay at last.'

I am,

Your, &c.

LETTER VII.

' Thy freedom barter'd for a pleasing chain,
New cares require a double load of pain.
Thy tender infants, eloquent to move,
Call for the duties of paternal love ;
To thee, the wants of thy lov'd consort call,
To thee, the father, husband, friend of all.'

I FIND, Philetus, that you are about to engage in a new undertaking, or, as you are pleased to express it, going to launch your bark upon the sea of life : a sea, Philetus, on which you must expect to meet with adverse winds and swelling waves ; with numberless difficulties and dangers that have never yet disturbed your moments of repose, but to which every mariner is exposed, who has courage to embark, and fortitude to brave the dangers of the deep.

But here I shall drop the metaphor, and recommend to your notice a few observations, which, if regarded, may be serviceable to your

future welfare. This I shall do with pleasure and with frankness, because, whatever be their worth, I know they will be gratefully received. I speak thus confidently from a conviction that your ideas of right and wrong are influenced by the light of reason, and a conscientious regard to those divine precepts intended for the direction of our moral conduct.

It may be needless to ask, Whether, in the matter that engages your attention, there be a concurrence between the Word and the providence of God? because I think no reasonable man would undertake any thing without believing that such a coincidence existed.

Business seems to be the means intended for your support. And here, Philetus, permit me to observe, that industry is the ordinary way to prosperity. Indolence will clothe a man with rags; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. The possession of temporal blessings is so closely connected with our exertions in the present life, that they are not often separated. Idleness 'never can secure tranquillity; the

call of reason and of conscience will pierce the closest pavilion of the sluggard, and, though it may not have force to drive him from his down, will be loud enough to hinder him from sleep.' This remark, if properly considered, will rouse attention and stimulate activity, without the exertion of which we have no right to expect, nor indeed can we reasonably solicit the bestowment of any favour. 'He that floats lazily down the stream, in pursuit of something borne along by the same current, will find himself indeed moved forward; but unless he lays his hand to the oar, and increases his speed by his own labour, must be always at the same distance from that which he is following.'

Godliness is indeed profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; but no man can rationally expect the blessings of the one, or the bounties of the other, without using means adapted to the end. The Lord hath promised, that while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and

winter, and day and night shall not cease. But does this benign declaration induce the husbandman to remit his diligence, and to waste in torpid indolence the time allotted for the culture of his field? No: he tills the ground; he sows the seed in hope; and in the appointed weeks of harvest, the earth teems with renewed blessings. He sees the fulfilment of the promise, and receives the produce as the fruit of his industry and toil.

But still, Philetus, you must remember that the increase of worldly substance is not always connected with industry. It sometimes happens that the most unwearied endeavours prove unsuccessful. One man, without either integrity or diligence, shall soon accumulate a large fortune; while another, possessed of both, shall rise up early and sit up late, and after all be scarcely able to procure the necessities of life. 'To make great acquisitions can happen to very few; and in the uncertainty of human affairs, to many it will be incident to labour without reward, and to lose what they already possess by endeavours to

make it more. Some will always want abilities, and others opportunities, to accumulate wealth.' But to give, in all cases, a satisfactory account for the unequal distribution of temporal good, is not the province of human reason. We must say with the venerable mother of Samuel, 'The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich : he bringeth low, and lifteth up : or with Him that excelled in wisdom and in knowledge, The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill ; but time and chance happeneth to them all.'

Trade, in all its branches is precarious, and its advantages are uncertain. The principles of mankind are in general so corrupt, that almost every species of iniquity is rendered familiar by custom, and practised too often with impunity. Hence many of the bankruptcies, together with a thousand fraudulent expedients by which the unsuspecting creditor is despoiled of his property. Hence the luxury, the dissipation, and the profusion which disgrace the

man of business: hence also much of that penury and distress which, from every quarter, calls for the kind interposition of the generous and humane—calamities which, when unavoidable, it is a duty to commiserate; but which, if known to be the result of indolence, of prodigality, or of pride, are too apt to check the risings of compassion, even when the hand of charity is extended to relieve.

I believe, Philetus, there are comparatively but few bankruptcies which might not have been prevented. Nine out of ten, perhaps, originate either in that extravagance so frequently seen in common life; in the want of diligence in business; or in a practice still more dishonest, that of secreting such effects as are charged to a loss in trade. The truth of the former accusations is too obvious to be disputed; and the latter, if not so common, is nevertheless supported by the most positive proof: witness those unhappy sufferers who have unwillingly complied with the requisitions of the penal law, even at the expense of life; and witness the many whose conduct affords

presumptive evidence that they are not more honest, though more successful in the concealment of their fraud.

It is not uncommon to see persons who have just entered into business, furnishing their tables with the superfluities and the delicacies of life; frequenting places of public entertainment and diversion; pursuing the most trifling amusements with avidity, and sparing no expense to gratify the love of sensual pleasures. Nor is it unfrequent to see a man, who the other day was a bankrupt, carrying on a very extensive trade, moving in a sphere of life to which he had never been accustomed, and perhaps soon after riding in his chariot. How this can be done by him who has unreservedly delivered up the whole of his effects to a set of injured creditors, is a mystery I have yet to learn, but with which I have no desire to be acquainted.

Such a man may, indeed, loll at ease in his vehicle, and he may smile at his creditors who are trudging in the dirt behind him; but his

tranquillity will quickly be disturbed, if he recollect that, though the law exonerated him from debts he was once unable to discharge, and humanely interposed that he might provide future subsistence without embarrassment, these individuals are, nevertheless, still injured by his misfortune or his negligence; that indigence may have attended some dejected to the grave; and that others may be yet groaning under burdens without prospect of relief. And should conscience be roused from its torpor, it will convince him that if the statute, which in its clemency procured his enlargement, laid no claim to affluence which diligence or success might afterwards accumulate; yet that, in honour and in equity, his creditors have a right, prior to the calls of luxury or the demands of avarice; and that, when his own necessities are supplied, the remainder should be appropriated to liquidate those debts which the laws of his country have remitted, but which are, notwithstanding, obligatory while capacity for payment remains, while moral obligation between man and man continues, and one farthing is unpaid.

It is true, that while in the body, we are never so placed as to be certainly exempted from the common casualties of life. 'Death may intercept the swiftest career; but he who is cut off in the execution of an honest undertaking, has at least the honour of falling in his rank, and has fought the battle, though he missed the victory.'

In the prosecution of the plan you have formed, I will imagine it possible that you may hereafter meet with such losses in trade, as shall considerably impair your fortune. Suppose, for instance, that you should be so far reduced as not to be able to pay your creditors more than fifteen shillings in the pound. In this case what is to be done? Some will say, Venture another year; things may come round again; and you may be enabled to pay every one his just demands: but I say, Philetus, Stop here; and indeed this should have been done before, if your circumstances were known to be on the decline. In such a dilemma, however, summon your creditors together; lay before them an impartial statement of your

affairs; acquaint them with the expenditure of your money, the profits of your business, and the losses that you have unavoidably sustained. This will give them the highest proof of your integrity, and perhaps encourage them to risk their property with confidence in your hands; hoping that Providence may yet smile on your endeavours; may yet repair their deficiency; and recompense you afterwards for your industry and care.

This step must be taken, Philetus, if you mean to preserve your reputation inviolate in the world. The principles of common honesty demand this at least; and however strongly a contrary practice may be recommended by example, it is highly criminal, and deserving of much severer punishment than is generally inflicted on such public robbers.

The reasonableness of my advice will be obvious, if you consider that in still continuing your business, you run a very dangerous risk, not at your own expense, but at the expense of those whose property you possess,

and to whom you are accountable. To this consideration add also the little probability there can be of success in such a desperate undertaking, and I am persuaded you will see the propriety of my remarks. Hope, remember, is 'always liberal: and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.'

For the present, we will estimate your returns when in full trade, at six thousand a year; but by a decrease of business and other occurrences you are brought into the situation above mentioned. Now, Philetus, if, without remissness on your part, trade has gradually declined, what reason is there to expect that the next year will be more propitious than the last? Suppose, however, that your attempt should prove as successful as your wishes, and your returns and profits equal to what they once were, this would by no means answer your present purpose. We have already allowed your returns to be six thousand a year; we will now settle your profits at ten per cent. your disbursements at four hundred per annum,

and the claims of your creditors at three thousand pounds. Upon this plan, you will lay by two hundred a year, which is to be reserved for the payment of your debts: but as there is a deficiency of seven hundred and fifty pounds, the same uninterrupted success will be requisite for more than three years, before you can discharge the debt you have incurred.

These remarks are not made with a view to depress the exertions of industry, but to excite vigilance in detecting the fallacy of those specious arguments by which the unwary are deceived: to guard you also against the treachery of him who shall, in such circumstances, attempt to allure with the hope of success, by urging as a reason for trying the experiment, The embarrassment of your affairs, which, to disclose, must destroy your credit, bring inevitable ruin, and preclude at once all possibility of recovery; insinuating, at the same time, That as more cannot be expected when things are at the very worst, it can be of little importance to the debtor, whether he pay five or fifteen shillings in the pound.

As your fortune is comparatively small, your business cannot be of equal extent with the opulent in trade: be content therefore to move in a more contracted sphere, and careful not to exceed its limits. To aspire after things beyond your reach, is to court the pain of disappointment. Remember the declaration of him who said—‘They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.’

It is perhaps needless to point out the impropriety and the folly of those who, on their first setting out in life, launch into dangerous extremes. One of considerable importance however I will mention.

In carrying on your business, be content with a house, and such accommodations as are suited to the capital you possess, and the returns you have reason to expect. It is too frequent a custom with young persons, if possessed of a few hundred pounds, to occupy a house, the rent, taxes, and other expenses of

which require the profits of as many thousands in a way of trade. To determine what can induce men thus to act is not easy, unless it be pride ; which is always envious at the happiness or the success of others, and which generally overcomes its votaries by pleading a right to privileges equal to those whose circumstances in life are easy, if not affluent. The most plausible excuse that can be urged for occupying a large house, is that of procuring and preserving trade : and indeed it is possible that the attention of some persons may be attracted by the magnificence of a building. But it is one thing to attract attention, and another to attract custom ; for when men find that they are likely to pay dear for their love of elegance, they will very readily relinquish the splendour of a shop, and purchase the same commodity where it may be had much cheaper, though it may happen to be in one of less figure. Men of considerable property, and of long standing in business, may indeed support a degree of magnificence with reputation and propriety ; but, with a small capital, this cannot be done by the young beginner without

either the intervention of more than ordinary success, the laying on of extravagant profits, or taking undue advantage of the ignorant and unwary.

But the evil does not stop here, Philetus. A magnificent house will make but a poor show if not furnished and adorned suitably to its appearance. The tradesman who is desirous of commanding respect and custom by the figure that he makes in life, cannot willingly submit to be thought what he really is, and therefore he assumes a character to which he has no claim. To maintain his dignity and grandeur, his entertainments are splendid; and if the want of business be likely to disappoint his ambitious schemes, unfair methods are taken, prejudicial to the interest of the honest and industrious trader, in order to support his credit, his luxury and his pride. Manufactures are sometimes sold greatly under value; and when opportunity serves, their price is not unfrequently extended beyond the limits of justice. Thus he goes on from one evil to another, until his property is wasted, his creditors

defrauded, and he is himself involved in ruin and disgrace.

If, therefore, you would avoid these fatal disasters, be content with such a house and accommodations as your business may require. Let not your expences exceed your income, but rather strive to have them considerably less. By such a conduct you will always retain something in hand that may enable you to bear the losses incident to trade without being materially hurt: but on the other hand, a drawback of that nature may prove fatal to your interest, unless prevented by some extraordinary occurrence.

On this subject, Dr. Johnson's advice to his friend Boswell cannot be unpleasant. I will transcribe it for your perusal.

' You, dear sir, have now a new station, and have therefore new cares, and new employments. Life, as Cowley seems to say, ought to resemble a well ordered poem; of which one rule generally received is, that the exordium

should be simple, and should promise little. Begin your new course of life with the least show, and the least expense possible ; you may at pleasure increase both, but you cannot easily diminish them. Do not think your estate your own, while any man can call upon you for money which you cannot pay ; therefore, begin with timorous parsimony. Let it be your first care not to be in any man's debt.

‘ When the thoughts are extended to a future state, the present life seems hardly worthy of all those principles of conduct, and maxims of prudence, which one generation of men has transmitted to another ; but upon a closer view, when it is perceived how much evil is produced, and how much good is impeded by embarrassments and distress, and how little room the expedients of poverty leave for the exercise of virtue, it grows manifest that the boundless importance of the next life enforces some attention to the interests of this.’

Smuggling, in all its branches, let me entreat you to avoid. This evil, however recom-

mended by the practice of men from whom we might expect better things, is hurtful to the industrious trader, injurious to the interests of society, and contrary to the command of God.

Let me also advise you to have but one price in retailing your commodities; from which never deviate, unless the article be damaged or inferior in quality. By a steady uniformity in this practice, you will prevent much needless altercation; and, what is infinitely more important, avoid those falsehoods that are common in a way of trade, but which are nevertheless highly criminal in the sight of the Lord God of truth. There are indeed some professed christians who call them by a softer name: but if asserting, as is usually the case, that a farthing less than was asked for the article in question cannot be taken, and afterwards abating perhaps a shilling, be not an untruth, I know not what is. If, however, these casuistical venders can prove it to be otherwise, this must be effected by some of those logical mysteries in trade with which I am unacquainted, which are not found in systems of ethics, or

theology, and which were unknown to him who said, Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.

Suppose, however, that the practice against which I am writing, could be rescued from the positive charge of falsehood ; this would by no means warrant the use of it to a follower of Christ. It is not sufficient that the christian avoid the commission of actual sins only, for more is certainly required of him who is commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil ; who is to speak the truth to his neighbour, and so to walk that he may be pronounced blameless and without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. 'Circumspection is always necessary to him that would shun the verge of temptation : because he that suffers the slightest breach in his morality, can seldom tell what shall enter it, or how wide it shall be made ; when a passage is open, the influx of corruption is every moment wearing down opposition, and by slow degrees deluges the heart.' Watchfulness, with regard

to our words, is in some respects as necessary for the honour of religion as it is in the actions of life ; or at least as necessary for the approbation of him who ‘ views effects in their causes and actions in their motives :’ and who hath declared, ‘ That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment,’

Certainly it must be painful to a conscientious man to be even suspected of duplicity ; but the custom against which I now speak, lays a foundation for more than suspicion : because he who lives in the practice of it may be justly charged with a deviation from truth, that was intended to deceive. It is true that men of the world, who are as much bound to regard truth as the real christian, may commit this evil, and others yet more flagrant, without being exposed to general reproach ; but this will seldom be the case with the man who is distinguished by an inflexible reverence for the moral precepts of religion. The slightest mistake on his part, is much more likely to be considered as com-

plete evidence of intentional deception ; and if not exemplary in every part of his conduct, he must expect to feel the severe lash of unmitigated censure. He, therefore, who is desirous of honouring that gospel which he professes to esteem, must keep his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile ; or, to use the words of Him who spake as never man spake, Must let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven.

But, Philetus, the evil of such a custom is not merely personal : the consequences are felt by the community at large. Many individuals, unacquainted with the method of carrying on trade, and even some that are, have perhaps too much modesty to dispute the veracity of a man who can look them seriously in the face, and assure them on his word that he asks the lowest price. And indeed, after such a declaration, he that can instantly bid him less, must possess more assurance than falls to the lot of most men. Such persons are therefore unge-

nerously defrauded of their property; and the mean haggler, who thinks he never buys a bargain without abatement, purchases the same article, perhaps, for a sum considerably less.

Let me inform you, however, that if this plan be followed, you must not expect the custom of these bargain-hunters: for were they to encumber your shop for a few moments, you would find as much difficulty in convincing them that it is possible to buy a cheap bargain without abatement, as in demonstrating to their mere senses the opacity of the moon, the diameter of the sun, or the satellites of Jupiter. By the loss of their favours, however, you would receive no other injury than what might follow the derangement of your goods, and the time wasted in answering such impertinents. As for the more liberal and rational part of mankind, you may with propriety expect to be indulged with their countenance and support. Every man is not a competent judge of the article he means to purchase; he will therefore be glad to lay out his money with the tradesman on

whose probity he can rely, both for the quality and the cheapness of his goods.

Labour also to extend your business, not by the prevailing custom of visiting abroad and entertaining much company at home; but by retailing a commodity of equal value and on equal terms with your honest neighbour. In this practice success may be reasonably expected. Suppose, however, that business should not keep pace with your wishes; suppose it should produce merely enough for subsistence, and the expences to which you must of course be liable, will it not be consoling to reflect.—That, as all your dealings were founded on principles of justice, you have not wronged any man by an illicit practice? This being the case, your repast, though not sumptuous, will be sweet and satisfying; the bread of industry, and not the spoils of dishonesty and guile. ‘Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.—A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.’

Worldly men are indeed struggling with each other for wealth, and are determined to procure it, if possible, either by force or by fraud; though, as one expresses it, ‘they sacrifice conscience, and lose heaven in the scuffle. They shift their sails, and run before every wind that blows. If times grow rough and tempestuous, and they must throw overboard either their gain or their godliness; they make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, only that they may bear up in the present world, though they sink in the next.’

That I may encourage you to persevere in this path of duty, suffer me to add, that virtue will meet with a suitable reward.—You will have the gratulations of a peaceful conscience. Your conduct will bear the scrutiny of men, and stand the trial of that day when the hidden things of darkness shall be made manifest; when the secrets of all hearts shall be opened, and every work brought into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

‘Let religion be incorporated with your law-

ful employments, and improved by an attention to the whole course of providence to you and yours. Nothing is more hurtful to religion, than to confine it to particular times and places: I should have rather said, there is not a greater mistake in religion, than to imagine that it can be so confined. True religion will show its influence in every part of your conduct: it is like the sap of a living tree, which penetrates the most distant boughs. In your ordinary calling, see that you undertake nothing but what is lawful in its end; and endeavour to accomplish nothing by any but lawful means, that you may have always the comfort of a conscience void of offence. Nay, you should even do more; you should endeavour to act so single and sincere a part as to be beyond the imputation of a fraud, that all who know you may put the most unbounded confidence in your integrity.—There are many other calumnies which we may naturally expect from a malicious world, and it ought to trouble us very little to hear them; but it must be extremely distressing to a good man to be but suspected of dishonesty.'

What, Philetus, would it profit a man, if by the secret and dark mysteries of trade he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Would heaps of dishonest wealth administer consolation in a dying hour? Would these alleviate the pangs of guilt, or bribe the inexorable hand of Death? No;

' Now plung'd in sorrow, and besieg'd with pain,
He finds too late all earthly riches vain.
Disease makes fruitless every sordid fee,
And Death still answers—"What is gold to me?"'

This world, so plentifully stored with all the creatures of God, has been fitly compared to a ' large house richly furnished, in which the beneficent owner has liberally provided all things for accommodation and use, but nothing that can properly be denominated ours. He hath therefore stationed at the door that grim porter, Death, to see that, as we brought nothing into it, we should carry nothing out. But what a sad parting hour must that be to him who has gotten nothing but what he can no longer keep, who, when going into another world, is compelled to leave all behind that he loved and admired in the present !'

‘ When the last hour seems to be approaching, all terrestrial advantages are viewed with indifference, and the value that we once set upon them is disregarded or forgotten. And if the same thought were always predominant, we should then find the absurdity of stretching out our arms incessantly to grasp that which we cannot keep, and wearing out ourselves in endeavours to add new turrets to the fabric of ambition, when the foundation itself is shaking, and the ground on which it stands is mouldering away.’

Be therefore thankful for your lot in life : godliness with contentment is great gain ; for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out : and if you but once make the trial, you will soon be convinced ‘ that the foundation of content must spring up in the mind ; and that he, who has so little knowledge of human nature, as to seek happiness by changing any thing but his own dispositions, will waste his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the griefs which he purposes to remove.’

‘ For how should ills, which from our passions flow,
Be chang’d by Afric’s heat, or Russia’s snow ?
The wretch by wild impatience driv’n to rove,
Vex’d with the pangs of ill-requited love,
From pole to pole the fatal arrow bears,
Whose rooted point his bleeding bosom tears ;
With equal pain each diff’rent clime he tries,
And is himself that torment which he flies.’

Contentment, I think, may be denominated the balm of human life. It will reconcile the mind to the dispensations of providence, and suppress those murmurs which are too apt to rise when the wicked prosper and flourish, while the righteous have scarcely bread to eat. Remember it is said of some—They have their portion in this life ; and a bitter one it is, when compared with the happiness that awaits the righteous in a better country.

You recollect, Philetus, I have already observed, that industry is the ordinary way to prosperity : if therefore by diligence in trade riches should increase, set not your heart upon them, lest ‘ when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein ; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and

all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God—and thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.'

When lawfully engaged in the affairs of life, remember that it is said, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' This admonitory language is the dictate of benevolence. Attachment to the riches, to the honours, or the pleasures of the world, has a natural tendency to divert the mind from better objects; to draw off its attention from the one thing needful, and to impede its progress in the pursuit of the only happiness that is worth enjoying. Our negligence in the present life, is such, that we are liable to abuse our mercies, nay, we shall certainly abuse them, if not prevented by the kind interposition of another hand. Every station in which we can be placed requires, besides the aids of divine grace, the utmost watchfulness and prayer, in order to counteract that depravity of nature,

that propensity to evil which is entailed upon the human race, and from which none have ever been exempted who were the natural descendants of our original progenitors.

‘It is not without reason that the apostle represents our passage through this stage of our existence by images drawn from the alarms and solicitude of a military life; for we are placed in such a state, that almost every thing about us conspires against our chief interest. We are in danger from whatever can get possession of our thoughts; and all that can excite in us either pain or pleasure, has a tendency to obstruct the way that leads to happiness, and either to turn us aside, or retard our progress.’

Were it lawful and becoming in a man to choose his circumstances in life, a mediocrity would perhaps be the most useful, and the freest from temptation, though, notwithstanding these advantages, some might think it not the most desirable. Opulence may tempt us to dissipation, indolence, sensuality, and total

forgetfulness of God. Poverty, to envy, falsehood, dishonesty, perjury. Let us therefore say with Agur, Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

But even those christians, Philetus, who move in this middle sphere, are not exempt from the calamities of life. They have their sorrows and their joys; they taste a bitter mixed with every sweet; they find a faithful monitor within, that tells them the earth is not their portion, that it was not given as their rest, nor intended as their home.—The Almighty Father of our spirits hath, in mercy, ‘written vanity and vexation upon every condition; and if his providence create not troubles for us, yet our own folly will: thus hath man made himself a slave and drudge to the world, over which God made him Lord.’

It has been justly remarked, That sorrow, in the present state, is the sad inheritance of man.

He is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. The first intelligence of his visible existence is announced by the voice of weeping: and through every stage of life, either his own sufferings, or the sufferings of others, claim the tear of sorrow; nor will the claim be remitted, nor the tear cease to flow, till it be 'dried up in the dust of the grave.'

I am,

Your, &c.

LETTER VIII.



Grant I may ever, at the morning ray,
Open with pray'r the consecrated day;
Tune thy great praise, and bid my soul arise,
And with the morning sun ascend the skies:
As that advances let my seal improve,
And glow with ardour of consummate love;
Nor cease at eve, but with the setting sun
My endless worship shall be still begun.

YOUNG.

I AM now going to transmit you my thoughts on a subject, Philetus, which is but little thought of in the world, and consequently not much regarded; I mean family worship. This however is a service highly reasonable in itself, and incumbent on the master of a family; and whatever may be the opinion or the practice of others, I flatter myself it will be statedly performed by you morning and evening.

For this purpose set apart a few moments that will not interfere with your lawful business.

The time to be spent in this devout exercise must be left to the dictates of discretion. To lay down a rule for general practice, where the circumstances and engagements of individuals are so various, is impracticable. The scriptures leave this matter wholly undetermined ; there being no divine injunction respecting it, though the practice itself is clearly revealed. It may however be needful to observe, that care should be taken to prevent any inconvenience arising either from the length or shortness of the time set apart for the performance of this important service.

‘ When Cicero was asked which of Demosthenes’ orations he thought best, he wittily replied, The longest. But if the question should be, Which of prayers are the best, The answer then must not be The longest, but the strongest : not the prayer that exceeds in quantity, but that which exceeds in quality. In moral actions the manner of working is a swaying circumstance : a man may sin in doing good, but not in doing well.’

The hour in which this duty should be performed is not particularly mentioned. Suffer me however to suggest, that it should be in the morning before breakfast. 'The advantage resulting from this order, if it can be conveniently admitted, is, says Dr. Stennett, considerable. In the first instance, besides the idea of its being most natural to begin the day with God, the service, thus disposed, will be in less danger of suffering interruption from secular affairs than if it were postponed to a further hour.'

With respect to your evening devotions, let them, if possible, be performed before supper; because the animal frame is then less encumbered, not so liable to drowsiness, and more at liberty to exert itself with vigour. Every man must be sensible that even necessary food, when first taken, has a natural tendency to blunt the operations of the mind in religious duties: and though some persons may not be so susceptible of this inconvenience as others, yet I think its influence must be more or less

experienced by all. If, therefore, one moment be more favourable to devotion than another, it ought to be embraced : for, as one expresses it, to ‘ choose the dullest and dearest times, when sleep is ready to close our eyes, and renders us unable to serve ourselves, is to choose a moment not adapted to the duty—We must feel a languor that will make us pray as if fearful that God should accept us, and as coldly as if unwilling he should hear us, and take away that lust by which we are governed, and against which conscience urges to pray.’

In scripture, honourable mention is made of family worship in commendation of faithful Abraham : I know, saith Jehovah, that he will command his children, and his household after him ; and they shall keep the way of the Lord. In this practice lived the venerable Joshua, who, on a review of the many deliverances God had wrought, said to the children of Israel, If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve : but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. After his example copied the royal Psalmist:

who, having finished the various services of the day, in which he had publicly testified his thankfulness for the divine interposition, retired from the world, and returned to bless his household: and in order to demonstrate his love of prayer, he cries, in another place, Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments. Job also, who is so justly admired and commended for his patience, rose early in the morning to offer for his family burnt offerings according to the number of his children. This, it is said, he did continually. Nor must we forget the example of the prophet Daniel, whose thanksgivings evince the ardour and the sincerity of his piety. The devout Cornelius likewise furnishes us with an example of family worship, and of the success with which it was attended. The petitions that sprang from his heart ascended as a memorial before God, and though imperfect, were accepted.

Now, Philetus, if illustrious examples had the same force in religion as in matters of little moment, how ready should we be to tread in the steps of these great and eminently pious

men! But, alas! we have to lament that their imperfections are more frequently imitated than their virtues. I hope however it is otherwise with you, and that, in reference to family worship, you are determined to follow their example.

It is probable you may meet with great opposition and discouragement in an undertaking that is so generally neglected; but 'to him who is animated with a view of obtaining approbation from the Sovereign of the universe, no difficulty should seem insurmountable.' It is true that the world in which we live, seems to think family worship rather the effect of superstition than the genuine offspring of religion: but such a reflection will have no weight where reason is permitted to preside.

Dr. Johnson said, when speaking to Mr. Boswell respecting Smart, the poet, 'Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the dis-

turbance of his mind by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question.'

The reasonableness of family worship will appear very obvious from a consideration of our unceasing obligations to God, as our maker, preserver, and benefactor. In him we live, and move, and have our being. To his unmerited beneficence we are perpetually indebted. If we are indulged with health and strength, with riches and honours, these are favours to which we have no claim, of which we may justly be deprived, and set upon the dunghill with the beggar. These certainly are truths that must at once strike the mind of every considerate man, and which the most abandoned and profane cannot be hardy enough, when serious, to deny. How then ought every testimony of the Divine munificence to excite our love, our

gratitude, and our praise ! If we have food and raiment, they are abundantly more than we deserve ; for in many things we all offend.

Why, Philetus, are we commanded to pray, Give us this day our daily bread, if not to teach us, among other things, our daily dependence upon God as the dispenser of temporal blessings? Most of our wants return with the morning ; and to whom should we look but to him who is able to supply them ? We need his direction through the vicissitudes and the perplexities of every day ; and without his gracious interposition and support, we can effect nothing to any valuable purpose. In the evening we seek rest in vain, unless he give slumber to the eyelids, and sleep to the eyes. Now as these are wants common to every family, and what all its members constantly experience, they ought certainly to unite in supplicating the divine goodness, and in returning thanks for the mercies of which they have jointly been partakers. Surely each can say with the Psalmist, It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O

Most High : to show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night—for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

Family worship is indeed so highly proper in itself, and calculated to answer such valuable purposes, that no man can justify his conduct in neglecting it. That the continuance of daily mercies calls for daily acknowledgments, is the dictate of reason as well as of religion. ‘ Some suspension of common affairs, some pause of temporal pain and pleasure, is surely necessary to him who deliberates for eternity, who is forming the only plan in which miscarriage cannot be repaired, and examining the only question in which a mistake cannot be rectified.’

That prayer is a duty resulting from our relation to the Almighty, as our Creator and Benefactor, can want no proof. It is, besides, a means by which the comfort and the happiness of his dependent and sinful creatures are promoted. He that knows what is in man,

stands in no need of intelligence respecting his condition. 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do—Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.'—In this, as in every other case, duty and privilege are inseparable; and the utility of prayer will be manifest when it is remembered that it is not intended to give the Father of spirits information concerning either our wants or our unworthiness, for these are perfectly known to him before they are felt or acknowledged by ourselves; but to impress the mind with a deep conviction of both, and to keep perpetually alive a sense of our entire dependence on him for the pardon of the one, and the supply of the other.

'Nothing so forcibly restrains from ill as the remembrance of a recent address to heaven for protection and assistance. After having petitioned for power to resist temptation, there is so great an incongruity in not continuing the struggle, that we blush at the thought, and persevere lest we lose all reverence for ourselves. After fervently devoting our souls to

God, we start with horror at immediate apostasy: every act of deliberate wickedness is then complicated with hypocrisy and ingratitude: it is a mockery of the Father of mercies, the forfeiture of that peace in which we closed our address, and a renunciation of the hope which that address inspired. But if prayer and immorality be thus incompatible, surely the former should not be neglected by those who contend that moral virtue is the summit of human perfection.'

In the neglect of either domestic or of private worship, we act much more inconsistently than we do in the common occurrences of life. Were we to receive the smallest token of respect at the hand of some earthly friend, we should be prompt in making our acknowledgments; we should feel pain in recollecting one opportunity when we might have testified our gratitude, but which was either neglected or forgotten. If then we pretend to be sensible of our obligations to our heavenly Benefactor—to that Friend who sticketh closer than a brother; by what shall we demonstrate the sin-

cerity of these pretensions, if not by yielding the obedience we acknowledge to be due, which we have it in our power to perform, and which the present state of our existence renders both a privilege and a duty? Surely it is right to 'seek him that turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night?'

If then, Philetus, the neglect of family worship cannot be vindicated in the openly profane, how can it be excused or countenanced in the real christian, who must experience a double tie for the performance of this relative and social duty. Besides the providential favours of which all men are undeservedly partakers, he is indulged with those spiritual supplies that are infinitely superior, and which admit of no comparison with sublunary enjoyments. He should therefore certainly be in all things exemplary: he should think it his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father; and especially when he considers that by separating himself from the corrupt conversation, amusements, and company of the

indeed under the influence of motives widely different from those of the sincere christian, and their prayers, as they have respect to God, meet with different success; but as they respect a man's religious and moral character in the world, they are the same in both. Men of the world are incompetent to judge either of a man's sincerity or spirituality in worship; but they can form a just estimate of his outward deportment, and, as that is, will either censure or approve. If therefore a man from natural principles, under a divine restraint, be exemplary in every part of his conduct, and the man of grace fail in reference to family worship; the former, let him act from what principles he may, will be viewed as more friendly to religion, as a brighter character in the world, and as a better member of society.

Indeed, Philetus, it is something strange that men who profess to have experienced the power of religion, should need to be exhorted to perform so reasonable a service. That there are persons of this description, is a truth too obvious to be disputed. As to the sincerity of

their religious pretensions, it is certain we may be deceived ; and however charitable we are in thinking favourably respecting their future state, we should be careful not to extend our charity so far as to extenuate or to countenance their faults. The omission of any part of known duty is a violation of moral obligation, and must inevitably produce guilt : and if it be possible for a sincere christian to live habitually in such an omission, his conscience must be fast asleep ; and he has reason to expect that, when once roused, it will severely scourge him for his crime.

Neglect of spiritual duties commonly arises from a declension of religion in the soul. ‘ A lover, says an elegant Essayist, finds no inclination to travel any path but that which leads to the habitation of his mistress ; a trader can spare little attention to common occurrences, when his fortune is endangered by a storm.’ In both these cases neglect of other objects is the effect of an over-ruling passion ; and when there is not a conscientious regard to the duties

of religion, the christian may rest assured that the love of something else is predominant.

If a man love me, said our Lord, he will keep my words—he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and there can be no doubt but that were we to live more under the sensible enjoyment of divine love, and under a deep conviction of our own unworthiness, we should be unreserved and prompt in our obedience. The ways of God would neither appear irksome nor grievous; but, as they truly are, ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.

Of all the passions that actuate the soul, there is no one more grateful nor more powerful than love. It is this that gives impulse to desire and ardour to pursuit. If therefore the christian be not spiritual in his conversation, and ready to every good word and work, it is manifest that his soul is barren, and his profession, however specious, dwindled into form. Such men, Philetus, are not an ornament, but a discredit to religion; and if they are saved

at last, it will be, as the apostle expresses it, So as by fire.

There is in the present age much profession of attachment to divine truth, and comparatively but little practical regard to divine precepts. It therefore becomes him who would adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, to manifest out of a good conversation that salvation by the cross of Christ is a doctrine according to godliness. To how many apparently religious characters are the words of our blessed Lord strictly applicable.—Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say!

It is certain that the most diligent attendance on the duties of religion can merit no favour at the hand of the Almighty; but it is equally certain that almost every spiritual, and every temporal mercy, is communicated—not in the neglect, but in the use of means. To use these means is the duty, the work, and the privilege of man; to impart the blessings

connected with them is the sole prerogative of heaven.

Let me therefore add to the consideration of temporal blessings, the honour of religion, and your reputation in the christian world, the spiritual consolations you have personally experienced. The contemplation of these things may produce the happiest effects, and excite pleasure which it is impossible to describe. The joy that is sometimes felt on a review of the divine beneficence is more than mortal: it is of the same nature, though not in degree, with that which is experienced by those happy souls who have exchanged a life of prayer for a life of uninterrupted and unceasing praise !

In prayer, which is the breath of spiritual life, we supplicate the throne of grace; we feel and lament our depravity and our guilt; we adore the power, the wisdom and the goodness of our heavenly Father; and there have been seasons in which the devout suppliant has realized the fulfilment of those encouraging pro-

mises, 'Those that honour me, I will honour—and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.'

The performance of family worship, Philetus, may be attended with the happiest effects: Your example will speak loudly to all around you, and recommend the religion you profess. If, in the course of Providence, you should be blessed with children, it is likely they may be benefited as much by this as by any other act of exemplary piety. Your servants also, who will not be forgotten in your petitions, may be gainers by such a conduct. Every exhortation intended to promote either their present or their future welfare, may be given with peculiar propriety and advantage in these serious moments of retirement. The solemnity of the occasion will give energy to every remark; will most likely engage their attention, and perhaps leave an impression on the mind, which neither the levity of youth, the corruption of human nature, the allurements of the world, nor even time itself shall be able to obliterate.

But the master of a family who neglects this important service, can have none of these advantages: nay, if he act consistently with his own practice, he cannot even urge them to the performance of any spiritual duty whatever; for he must be sensible that admonitions, however suitable and impressive, lose much of their force if not recommended by example. For this reason, every master of a family, 'should consider himself as intrusted, not only with his own conduct, but with that of others; and as accountable, not only for duties which he neglects, or the crimes that he commits, but for that negligence and irregularity which he may encourage or inculcate.'

If, on the other hand, they see you daily devoted to God in prayer, both on your own and on their behalf, they must think there is a reality in religion; something more than the world generally imagines, or perhaps than they themselves have experienced. The manifestation of your concern for their immortal part may also induce them to examine the propriety

of your remarks ; may be instrumental in the conversion of their souls ; and consequently have a tendency to promote both their present and their future happiness.

But if after every endeavour you should meet with disappointment, your kind interposition will probably secure their esteem ; and if it should so happen, this esteem will be evinced by a faithful discharge of those services in which they may be respectively employed. By such a conduct you will preserve order, harmony, and respect ; and prevent many of those disquietudes which are subversive of social happiness.

‘ There is nothing, says a good writer, which has so powerful a tendency to generate in the heart of any person good-will towards another, as the constant practice of praying to God for his happiness. Let a man regularly pray for his enemy with all that seriousness which devotion requires, and he will not long harbour resentment against him. Let him pray for his

friend with that ardour which friendship naturally inspires, and he will perceive his attachment to grow daily and daily stronger. If, then, universal benevolence, or charity, be a disposition which we ought to cultivate in ourselves, mutual intercession is undeniably a duty, because nothing contributes so effectually to the acquisition of that spirit which an apostle terms the end of the commandment.'

The morning, as one expresses it, 'is a resurrection from death to a new enjoyment of life—of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world.' It calls upon you, as the master of a family, for unequivocal expressions of devotion and gratitude.

Night has been considered as an emblem of death—as a pause—a stop in the progress of life: and in these views it is right, before we enter its solemnities, to recognise the transactions of the day; to mark those duties which have been either entirely omitted or carelessly performed; to recollect the favours graciously

bestowed ; to admire the Divine patience with which we have trifled, and to implore that protection and forgiveness, without which we are inevitably undone.

‘ Many oft times fall asleep in this world, and awake in the other, and have no summons to acquaint them whither they are going. And yet though every man’s condition be thus uncertain, and his breath in his nostrils, where there is as much room for it to go out as to come in ; how few make their night’s repose to serve as a memorial of their last rest ! Some pervert the night, which was ordained to be a cessation of the evils of labour, to make it a season for their greater activity in the evils of sin. They devise, as the prophet saith, iniquity upon their beds, and when the morning is light they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

‘ When therefore the generality of men are such unthrifths of time, and like careless navigators, keep no journal or diary of their motions,

and other occurrences that happen ; what need have others to pray, with Moses, ‘ So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.’ He who was learned in all the sciences of the Egyptians, desires to be taught of God so to number, as not to mistake, or to make any error in the account of life, by setting down days for minutes, and years for days. A man would naturally think that a little arithmetic would serve to cast up so small a number as the days of him whose days are as the days of an hireling, few and evil : and yet it is such a mystery, that Moses begs of God to be instructed in it as that which is the chief and only knowledge. Yea, God himself earnestly wishes this wisdom to Israel his people—‘ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.’

‘ Let us therefore number our days by meditating what our days are, and the end for which our lives were given ; by reckoning our day by our work, and not by our time ; by what

we do, and not by what we are : by remembering that we are in a continual progress to the chambers of death. No man's life is so long at the evening as it was in the morning. Night and day are as two axes, which, without rest, are alternately at the root of our life. A chip flies off every day and every night, and the stroke is continued till at length we are hewn down and fall at the grave's mouth.'

In the performance of family worship, Philletus, you will experience a pleasure that will induce you to persevere in the midst of surrounding opposition ; and it is this pleasure that will support and animate you under many of the trials with which you must expect to meet in civil, in domestic, and religious life. It is this that will make the most pressing difficulties appear comparatively light ; and if these difficulties be contrasted with the many spiritual blessings with which you are favoured, they will appear light as the dust on the balance. In a word, the consolation sometimes enjoyed in the practice of this relative and social duty, cannot

be expressed; it would beggar the most elaborate description.

The present world, remember, is but a passage to the next; and while travelling through it, be careful not to regard it as your home. 'He that lives longest lives but a little while; every man therefore may be certain that he has no time to waste. The duties of life are commensurate to its duration, and every day brings its task, which if neglected is doubled on the morrow. But he that has already trifled away those months and years, in which he should have laboured, must remember that he has now only a part of that of which the whole is little; and that since the few moments remaining are to be considered as the last trust of heaven, not one is to be lost.'

But the end of all things is at hand: let us therefore not sleep, as do others, but henceforward endeavour to be more provident of time. The night is far spent, and the hour cometh when no man can work. 'Whatsoever

thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' Let us use this world, as not abusing it ; for every thing in it that can either grieve or delight is passing away. Let us be anxious for nothing but the consolations which religion can certainly impart. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. The duties she enjoins, ' if sincerely and regularly performed, will always be sufficient to exalt the meanest, and to exercise the highest understanding. That mind will never be vacant, which is frequently recalled by stated duties to meditations on eternal interests ; nor can any hour be long, which is spent in augmenting desire for celestial happiness.

Before I conclude, Philetus, I will transcribe for your perusal a few lines written on the present subject by a learned and judicious author. ' Let me exhort you, says he, to be careful and conscientious in family government and instruction. How inexcusable are those parents and masters, who suffer their children and servants

to perish for lack of knowledge? What unspeakable advantages do you enjoy, having all the force of natural affection, as well as natural authority, to give your instructions weight? How many have remembered, with pious gratitude, through a whole life, the benefit they have received from family instruction and example? I know I speak to many who are accountable to God for this mercy; how shall you answer it then, if you do not give the same advantage to your own families? And how shall they answer to God, think you, who have banished the worship of God from the families in which they found it? One would think the lifeless walls and furniture of your chambers might be awakening monitors.

‘There is the greatest mutual influence between family and personal religion. Personal religion is the foundation of all family and relative duties. It would be speaking to the deaf to persuade any to watch over the souls of others, who have no concern for their own. But wherever there is a deep impression of the importance of eternity for ourselves, this will

naturally and necessarily set before us its importance with respect to all that are dear to us. On the other hand, for the same reason, family religion is one of the best and surest evidences of the reality and the strength of personal religion. It is sometimes observed, that some very pious persons are extremely defective in this particular; and take little care of the instruction, and still less of the government of their children. If they are truly pious, it is a very great blemish upon their piety. However, for my own part, I confess I do very much suspect the sincerity of religion in those who are remarkably negligent in this particular, let them profess as much as they will. I know that pious persons, from the weakness of their own judgment, will be guilty of great imprudence in the manner of family instruction, and from an absolute incapacity may not be able to preserve their authority; but I cannot easily reconcile with true piety, the absolute neglect of either the one or the other.

‘I must add, that I take family religion,

and the careful discharge of relative duties, to be an excellent mean of the growth of religion in a man's own soul. How can any person bend his knees in prayer every day with his family, but it must be a powerful restraint upon him from the indulgence of any sin which is visible to them? Will such a person, think you, dare to indulge himself in anger, or choose to be seen by them, when he comes home staggering with drunkenness, unfit to perform any duty, or ready to sin still more by the manner of performance? When I figure to myself a master of a family, who had come home sotted like a beast, and half-supported to his house, rising in the morning, I am not able to conceive how he can bear the looks of those members of his family who had been witnesses of his shame. But, besides being a restraint from gross crimes, I cannot help saying, that, speaking of the things of God, with the concern of a parent, or the humanity of a master, must give a solemnity of spirit, and a sense of their moment, even greater than before. A man cannot speak to purpose, without feeling what he

says ; and the new impression will certainly leave behind it a lasting effect. Let me, therefore, earnestly recommend to you the faithful discharge and careful management of family duties, as you regard the glory of God, the interest of his church, the advantage of your posterity, and your own final acceptance in the day of judgment.'

I am,

Your, &c.

FINIS.

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